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# STATESMAN AND NATION

## The Week-end Review

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THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION—The Week-end Review. *Incorporating The New Statesman, The Nation and Athenaeum, Week-end Review.*

WHAT is to happen after the "one more serious attempt in the Non-Intervention Committee" has failed? No one thinks that Mussolini will suddenly yield to persuasion and remove his soldiers from Spain, or that if General Franco wins with Italian soldiers he will be in a position to guarantee the Spanish sovereignty that he now promises. In any case his victory would mean a desperate challenge to France's communications, and would set her General Staff the insoluble problem of defence against an enemy in the south as well as in the east. Two suggestions are put forward. The first is to open the frontier—a mere restoration of the international rights of the Spanish Government which ought to have been carried out many months ago. The second is to "neutralise" the Balearic Islands. No one knows what this means. It is not easy to see how Mussolini can be turned out of Majorca without general war, and the British are said to be opposed to the less dangerous but still drastic step of occupying Minorca as a preventive measure, to be taken presumably with the concurrence of the Spanish Government. Since the French Cabinet is almost as divided and hesitant as the British, the chances are in favour of a compromise decision to augment Anglo-French naval patrols near the Balearics.

### The Far East

There has been severe fighting in China this week. On the northern front the Japanese armies have made a rapid advance, in which the retreating Chinese have suffered heavy losses. In the Shanghai sector there have been indecisive battles in a sea of mud. Meanwhile the Japanese aviators are at their old games. They made an attack on Tuesday, happily without inflicting any casualties, on three British Embassy cars which were going from Nanking to Shanghai. The Japanese explanation of this outrage is as coolly mendacious as usual—and we may whistle for redress or guarantee against its repetition. There is no sign as yet of the Western Governments acceding to the demand for a concerted boycott of Japan. Of America's intentions we know nothing more definite than Mr. Roosevelt told us last week—except that she will participate in the Nine-Power Conference, which is to be held on a date not yet fixed at a place not yet fixed—though Brussels is the probable venue. But the European Governments are preoccupied with (or should we say petrified by?) the European situation; and, unless the Italian leopard suddenly changes his spots, there is small chance of the Conference agreeing to follow words with deeds in the Far East.

### Belgian Inviolability

Belgian isolationists and those Belgians who are still attached in principle to the conception of the League,

but are understandably averse from having their country turned again into Europe's cockpit, are at liberty to derive such satisfaction as they can from Germany's formal declaration of willingness to respect the inviolability of Belgian territory. For what it is worth, Hitler now complements the Anglo-French declaration of last April with an assurance that Belgian independence is guaranteed equally by Germany. There is, however, an important reservation. The pledge will not hold good if Belgium is used as a base for military operations by other countries, nor, presumably, if she permits passage of troops acting against an aggressor in virtue of Article XVI of the Covenant, to which Belgium is a signatory. We have every sympathy with the reluctance of Belgium to be committed in advance to participate in others' quarrels, but the chances of her succeeding in immunising herself from a Western European war are remote. The requirements of general staffs are more imperative than diplomatic declarations. Belgian pacifists have geography against them. As a cockpit, Spain may not always suffice.

### Rally of the Franc

It is an ill wind—. Thanks to the slump in the London and New York stock markets, accompanied by the usual exaggerated rumours of insolvencies in store, an appreciable volume of the "funk" money which shifts nervously from capital to capital has this week moved to Paris. In consequence, the franc exchange has recovered by several points, and the French "control" is reported to have gained at least £10,000,000 of foreign exchange by sales of francs. Apart from this temporary factor, however, fears of impending political crisis in France have been lessened by the results of the first ballot in the Cantonal elections. The number of candidates who failed to secure clear majorities was large, and the final composition of the *Conseils* depends on next Sunday's second ballot; but it is clear that the country's verdict is broadly in favour of the present modified Front Populaire, whose candidates polled 62 per cent. of the total vote, against 55 per cent. at the General Election of 1936. M. Chautemps' Radicals have gained; M. Blum's Socialists have lost a little, and the Communists proportionately more. There is no indication that the electorate is incensed by M. Bonnet's "retrenchment and reform" to the extent of swinging so far to the Left as to break the Popular Front. Unless the Radical Congress, which meets at Lille on October 28th, stampedes the Government into further concessions to Big Business, the Socialist conference next month seems likely to give the present regime a renewed, if not over-enthusiastic, vote of confidence.

### Congress Convened

President Roosevelt's Columbus Day broadcast cleared up one uncertainty; Congress is to meet for a special autumn session on November 15th, and a lengthy programme of domestic legislation is to be tabled. There will be Bills to regulate wages and working hours, to restrict farming production, to approve regional irrigation and power projects, to reorganise the executive Departments of State, and to tighten the anti-trust laws. Clearly Mr. Roosevelt has been convinced by his recent tour that the public appetite for New Deal legislation is not yet satisfied, no matter what the reactions of Wall Street may be. In foreign affairs, however, the Presidential line-up is still obscure. America is to co-operate with the other democracies; "peace must be affirmatively reached for"; but the Government's aim is "to keep America out of war for generations to come." It may be that the President is seeking gradually to swing American sentiment away from isolationism; his emphasis in the broadcast on the importance of international trade and his insistence in a previous speech on America's "spiritual union" with all lovers of freedom may have been designed to make the United States think less parochially and more in terms of the defence of democracy throughout the world. But it is unrealistic to argue from this that the U.S. Government is now prepared, even at the risk of war, to intervene actively in Far Eastern, still less European conflicts.

### C.I.O. v. A.F. of L.

The American Federation of Labour has at length taken the step so often predicted, and empowered its committee finally to expel Mr. Lewis and Mr. Hillman and the Unions affiliated to the Committee for Industrial Organisation. The C.I.O. Unions, headed by Mr. Lewis's United Mine Workers and Mr. Hillman's Amalgamated Clothing Workers, had been for some time suspended from membership of the A.F. of L., and their delegates were not present to cast their votes against expulsion, which was accordingly approved by a very large majority. Presumably the C.I.O., which has so far maintained only a provisional organisation, will now convert itself into a fully constituted Trade Union centre, in definite rivalry and opposition to the A.F. of L. Mr. William Green, and the other A.F. of L. leaders, will accuse it of Bolshevism and of all other crimes against the American spirit; and Mr. Lewis will retort by enrolling bodies of workers he has hitherto left alone because of their connection with the older body. There will be a vehement struggle in the various State Federations of Labour, which have so far held together opponents of the rival Trade Union centres; and the outcome of the struggle will depend, on the one hand, on Mr. Lewis's success in disciplining his raw recruits into a real Trade Union movement in face of the growing opposition of big business, and on the other on the course of industrial activity. Continued prosperity, or a really big slump, will help Mr. Lewis; moderate depression, by weakening Trade Unionism without provoking positive revolt, would work on the side of the Labour conservatives in the A.F. of L.

### The Coming Elections in the U.S.S.R.

The elections for the "Parliament" of the U.S.S.R.—the first under the new Constitution—are to be held a couple of months hence. Preparations for the polling are under way, and the electoral "campaign" has already opened. The new Constitution is on the face of it as good as could be wished for. The franchise is of the widest, and now extends to many who were formerly disfranchised. The old disparity of representation of town and country has been altered. And the secret ballot has been substituted for open voting. To laugh at all this, as some critics have done, on the ground that the masses in the U.S.S.R. are inexperienced in the methods of Western democracy, is absurd. It is equally absurd to pretend that these methods will turn the totali-

tarian Soviet State into a democracy as we understand it. But the new Constitution was welcomed as evidence both of the greater stability of the regime and of the general desire to liberalise it. It is an unfortunate coincidence that these elections should be taking place in a period of widespread and profound insecurity. The campaign in all the circumstances can hardly be expected to do much for the political education of the Soviet citizens. Unless the " purge " is called off—of which there is not much sign at present—its main features will be glorification of Stalin and denunciation of " Trotskyite traitors and wreckers ".

### The Two Party Conferences

As between the Conservative and Labour Party Conferences a notable point of difference was the part played by leadership. At Scarborough, the principal event was Mr. Chamberlain's address, and such important matters as that of the reorganisation of the Conservative Party's methods of financing elections were referred to " the leader." At Bournemouth " the leader " counted for comparatively little ; and it became clearer than ever that, behind the Labour Party Executive and Conference, the real arbiter of party policy is the National Council of Labour, in which the Trade Unions have a preponderant voice. This fact to some extent lessens the significance of the concessions made to the Divisional Labour Parties in the choice of the Executive ; for what the Trade Union leaders have given up on one body they retain upon the other. The Divisional Labour Parties, however, pleased by the Executive's generous gesture and desperately anxious to be loyal, proceeded to re-elect Dr. Dalton and Mr. Dallas, as well as electing Sir Stafford Cripps, Prof. Laski and Mr. Pritt. The unity movement is dead, and the pacifists—thanks mainly to Hitler, Mussolini and Franco—heavily defeated ; but the Conference was not in the mood to approve persecution of heretics. To suggest, as the *Times* did, that the Conference moved to the Left is inaccurate. The obscurantist, bureaucratic Right elements have had nominally to pipe down, and the Divisional Labour Parties have shown that they want vigorous policies, coloured at least with Socialism. The Party has gained in solidarity and has at any rate " gone Centre." It may yet move to the Left, if events are propitious and the Left keeps its head.

### Labour Wins North Islington

Labour has won a notable victory in the North Islington by-election. At the General Election the Conservative majority was 3,385 ; Dr. Haden Guest has now recaptured the seat with a majority of 1,296. The poll was exceptionally small—a bare 40 per cent. This is largely explained by the fact that the election was held on the old register, a couple of days before the coming into force of the new one. There have been recently something like 14,000 removals from the constituency, and few of those who have left would be expected to come in to register their votes. The main issues on which Labour scored were the Government's fatuous foreign policy—" wobbling into war," as Dr. Haden Guest put it—and the widespread discontent with the cost of living. Rising prices of food and domestic commodities are everywhere hitting working-class families very hard, and there is no substance in the complaint of Sir Wilfrid Sugden that his defeat was due to " misrepresentation on the food price question."

### Nuffield College

Lord Nuffield has given another million to the University of Oxford ; but this time the gift is directed not to medicine primarily, but to the social studies. There is to be a brand-new College—Nuffield College—with no undergraduates, but with dons and research students, who are to rub shoulders with men of affairs in order to give a more practical bent to Oxford's social studies, and make new links between business and university education. How precisely this twentieth-century All Souls is to be organised does not yet appear ; for much is left to the drafting of a statute by the University in agreement with the trustees who are to have charge of the benefaction. But, clearly, even after a good part of the million has been spent on bricks and mortar—for Lord Nuffield insists on a real college—there will be a large sum left over for the endowment of some form of social research ; and this will swell the gifts already made by the Rockefeller Trustees in aid of Oxford's latter-day activity in economic and political studies. Presumably, the University can be relied on to see to it that this sum is expended on genuine research, and not so used as to convert the new College into a vocational training centre for business specialists or a propaganda agency for making capitalism look academically more respectable than it is. If those twin dangers are fended off, anything that will make economic studies more realistic can be heartily welcomed. The new College might well take as its motto : " More facts, less equations."

### Cacophony on the Roads

At the considerable cost of £2,642 the Departmental Committee on Noise in the Operation of Mechanically Propelled Vehicles has compiled and issued a singularly inconsequential report. The deliberations of the Committee—aided by 200 observers who were asked to grade the noises of motor horns between " agreeable " (*sic*) and " unbearable "—have led it far along the paths of scientific dissection of cacophony, but not to any realisation of the practical problem involved. Its conclusion is that, in future, loudness of motor horns should be limited to 100 phons (British Standard Scale) at a distance of 20 feet from the front and sides of the car. Since 105 phons is the minimum found in tests to be necessary to give " audible warning " when overtaking even the lighter types of commercial vehicle, whereas 95–100 phons is the maximum beyond which residents on roads are aggrieved, the proposed standard is an illogical and unsatisfactory compromise. The common-sense solution is to allow a much higher maximum—say 120–130 phons —but to prohibit entirely the use of horns in built-up areas. The experience of silence zones at night has proved that in towns the use of horns is unnecessary, given careful and considerate driving. Limiting their loudness to 100 phons is no remedy against their abuse by drivers who imagine that sounding the horn is an excuse for lack of due care at corners and street crossings.

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# BEHIND THE LINES

"Have you seen Franco's latest joke?" asked my Spanish friend. The joke was a postage stamp recently issued by Franco. The design showed the conventional figure of St. James of Compostella, standard in hand, riding on a white charger, as he appeared to revive the spirits of the almost vanquished Christians in their battle with the Moors in the ninth century. According to the story, 60,000 Moslems lay dead on the field as a result of his appearance, and a few of them are usually shown under his horse's feet. It is not surprising that in Franco's stamp the Moors should be omitted, nor that Spaniards should laugh. Everyone I met in Spain regards this war as a foreign invasion, and if you say anything about Russians they point out that there have never been any but a few pilots and experts who came to help them in their hour of bitter need. That Mussolini is now the real enemy is so obvious to Spaniards that an Englishman everywhere meets astonished questions about British policy. Is Britain really pro-Franco? When will the frontier be opened? I tried conscientiously to explain that England was divided, that the Labour Party was doing its best, that the Government was conservative and anxious about the British Empire rather than actively pro-Franco, and that people in England were above all anxious to keep out of war. But, said the officer I talked to behind the lines, and people who discussed it in cafés, and the Minister I met in Valencia, even on these grounds, why are the British opposed to restoring our ordinary rights to buy arms and war materials? Can the French allow Italy to conquer Spain? And if France is involved can Britain keep out? In that case is not the best chance of peace to let Italy see, now before it is too late, that England and France are prepared to give full help to the popular cause in Spain?

* * *

A good-humoured crowd was scrambling for coloured leaflets that fell from a window of a house overlooking the main square of Valencia. They bore no imprint, being unauthorised anarchist leaflets. One began: "The foxy English must learn to give up their attempts at mediation." Was England making efforts at mediation, I asked, and would the Government welcome a compromise if one were possible? I was told that indirect approaches had been made, but as long as the Italians and Germans were allowed to intervene in Spain no peace seemed possible. After all the Government was merely defending itself against an attack from outside. It would willingly agree to the withdrawal of all foreign volunteers. General Miaja was emphatic on this point when I talked to him in Madrid. If he could get arms, he said, he would willingly lose the service of foreigners, invaluable though they had been in the past. Nor did the Government want any kind of reprisals or revenge. If the Italians and Germans go, said a Cabinet Minister, we would willingly give safe-conducts, even to Franco.

* * *

If the war is to go on, it will take a very large fully equipped Italian army to defeat the Government. Their own army is now well organised, well fed and beginning to take the offensive. There is no reason why the serious food shortage should not be met, partly by purchase from abroad and partly by better distribution and organisation. The internal politics on the Government side are greatly improved. Negrin and Prieto are efficient men, right wing socialists—scarcely as far to the Left as Dr. Dalton and Herbert Morrison—and they are supported by republicans who are conservatives and by the well-organised and now very moderate communist party, whose adherence to the Government is not any temporary piece of tactics, but firm and sincere. I found the communists admirers of Negrin and determined to be loyal to him and to suppress any groups which were not. The decision to move to Barcelona, which has since leaked out in the press here, was being very confidentially discussed when I was in Valencia. There are conveniences in the move; Barcelona is a big city with plenty of office accommodation and the advantages of a capital against a provincial town. But the main reason for the change is that it tells the world that the dispute between Catalonia and Valencia is over, that in future democratic Spain has one capital and one government. It should, in fact mean a drastic change in the efficiency of Catalonian organisation, an important step towards unity and economy.

* * *

Six hundred thousand is the smallest estimate I have heard of the people killed in Spain during the last fourteen months. It is an appalling figure out of a population of 28 millions. It includes, first, those killed in battle; secondly, those killed unofficially in towns like Madrid and Barcelona because they were Fascists or suspected Fascists; thirdly, those put to death as reds or as prisoners by Franco; and fourthly, those massacred wholesale by the Fascists in Badajos, Malaga, Guernica and other towns. I asked a Conservative journalist in Madrid, who knows Spain as few other men do, whether the killings have stopped on the Government side. He agreed that they had, though there had been a few unauthorised reprisals after Santander. The Government, he said, had never approved of these unofficial executions which were, however, the natural and indeed almost the inevitable result of the Fascist advance to the very gates of Madrid and the boast that a "Fifth Column" would rise on Franco's side within the city. On the other hand Franco, like the Japanese, appears to have adopted frightfulness as a deliberate policy. One always tries to believe that the bombs that kill civilians are intended for military objectives, but the theory cannot be maintained when the aeroplanes come down to earth and shoot their victims with machine guns. In the same way memories of the last war have made me sceptical of stories of atrocities, but some of them seem to be true. A boy in the International Brigade, not talking for quotation, remarked after the capture of Belchite that the worst part of the affair to him had been when, in order to capture a particular village, they had had to shell a barrier put up by the retreating Fascists and discovered when they arrived that it was composed of living children. I gathered there were about twelve of them tied together across a road. Three of them were still living when the village was taken, but died soon after. So far the Government has resisted demands for reprisals. I do not suggest that the Government planes have not killed any civilians when raiding Palma and other places. Presumably they have. But Dr. Negrin has steadily refused to adopt the tactics of counter-terrorism, and believes that the right

policy for a democratic Government is to encourage desertion from Franco's side by treating its prisoners well.

* * *

I understood the problem rather better when I visited a great barracks outside Valencia, which now contains some 1,900 prisoners. There they were, well-fed, clean and healthy, with only a handful of warders—and those unarmed. My friends and I were anxious to test their opinions. The result was discouraging. A few Moors we tried through an interpreter understood nothing. They were soldiers, they said, and came because they were told to. The Spaniards were naturally reluctant to say anything; the deserters from Franco's side and those who were willing to help the Government were, of course, already at work. These, we were told, were the remaining irreconcilables. More interesting were the Italians. Many of the Italians captured at Guadalajara had said they were duped; they were anti-Fascist at heart, conscripts who believed they were being sent to Abyssinia. But in this camp the captured Italians took a different line. Those we questioned declared they were fighting for their "Fascist ideals"; they spouted stock phrases and one of them declared that Mussolini had invaded Abyssinia because it belonged to Italy before the war and had been taken away at Versailles. The reason for all this seemed clear enough. When they were first captured they thought they were going to be shot. After some months of imprisonment under decent conditions they were convinced that they were to be exchanged or set free. Therefore they were more frightened of Mussolini than of the Spanish Government. They even expressed delight that morning when Franco's aeroplanes dropped bombs on Valencia. They present the Government with a difficult problem. What their real opinions are no one can say, nor how far more intensive government propaganda would be effective. Yet there they are; a possible source of danger and eating food which the civil population will badly need in the coming winter. Democracy will be hampered by a reluctance which General Franco would not share in similar circumstances; he would make them dig their graves and then finish them off with machine guns.

* * *

I have not the temperament for war. I prefer peace to victory. For myself I feel that there is no indignity or defeat that I would not prefer rather than to drop bombs on other people. But I don't see that this personal feeling has much immediate relevance. I know I am watching the death agony of a civilisation; its rotten fabric breaks now here and now there, each new rent weakening the whole and making more difficult the task of patching and renovating. Safe in England the individual may say, calmly and philosophically, that the highest good will be served by continuing, in spite of everything, to appeal to the reason and compassion which must be even in Mussolini. We shall not end war by force alone . . . It is easy to repeat truisms of this kind; the individual may even find rest for the soul in refusing to fight and attempting to organise non-violent resistance. But when war has begun such considerations seem irrelevant. How end the bloody thing?

* * *

Few experiences could be more strange than to walk about the busy streets of a capital city which still contains about a million people, shopping, standing in queues, cooking and labouring as they would anywhere else, and then to walk or take a tram or underground to a park just outside the city and find oneself in the trenches with the enemy only twenty yards away. You can go through a large suburb of Madrid in which only the shells of the houses stand, just like Arras in 1916, and then you can be taken a walk into no-man's land and be shown the bodies of three peasants, two men and a woman, roped together and bayoneted by Moors some months ago and left unburied to rot in the sunshine. It is a strange experience to walk back in this quiet sector of a monstrous battle line, to find schools for the almost illiterate soldiers and see on the walls the portraits of Washington and Wilson with those of Lenin and Ortega, to sit under the trees drinking beer with the soldiers, to listen to their stories and be shown the cigarette papers with anti-Fascist propaganda, which they throw over into the Fascist trenches. At such a moment one does not forget that all war is horrible and what is won at the war is usually lost at the peace; one knows that foul things are done on both sides; but one knows too that this war on the government side at least —and Franco will not let one visit his side—bears only a superficial resemblance to the war of 1914. Necessity has battered this army into shape; it is an army of the people, made up of men who know that they are fighting, not as a result of somebody's propaganda or for a cause alien to themselves, but fighting simply as men have always fought when the soil on which they live and which they love is invaded by foreigners, and when the new freedom which they had just begun to enjoy is once again threatened by an ancient tyranny. On such occasions it is useless to argue whether men ought to fight. They know no alternative.

CRITIC

# YOUTH

THE recent strikes of apprentices in the engineering trades on the Clyde in Lancashire and elsewhere have served to draw some measure of attention to a problem which, important enough in itself for the future of British industry, is in reality but a part of the much wider problem of juvenile labour as a whole. In these cases there have broken out, in a number of industrial centres, spontaneous strikes of young workers who are supposed to be under special conditions of tutelage because they are being equipped with an all-round skill at their several trades. This special condition is advanced by the employers as a reason for refusing to allow the Trade Unions to negotiate on behalf of these young workers, between whom and their several employers there is supposed to exist a quasi-paternal and altogether individual relationship which the hand of collective bargaining must not be allowed to touch. The apprentices of to-day, in effect, are to be regarded as the direct descendants of the old type of apprentices who lived in the master's house, ate at his board, and became in due course his journeymen before setting up in business for themselves—unless indeed they achieved the distinction of marrying his daughters and succeeding in due course to his business.

Yet in truth the apprentice of to-day has almost nothing in common with the old-time apprentice who was on his way to becoming a master. The most he can hope for is to remain a skilled journeyman all his life; and in very many cases nowadays he cannot hope even for this. For it is no longer easy in these days of hustle and mass-production for more than a very few young workers, even if they rank as apprentices, to secure in most factories anything like an all-round training

in the various branches of their trade. More and more, the apprentices, apart from a privileged minority, tend to be set down to routine tasks, and to be used as a source of cheap labour on work on which fully skilled craftsmen used to be employed. To the extent to which this occurs, the case for paying the apprentice a low wage clearly goes by the board. Yet in the absence of effective organisation and in face of the employers' refusal to recognise the rights of collective bargaining, the wages paid to most apprentices remain lamentably low.

Nor is this the whole story; in spite of the cheapness of apprentice labour and the tendency to use the apprentices for routine work instead of teaching them their trades, the whole institution of apprenticeship is declining in one industry after another. The proportion of boys who enter industry neither as apprentices nor as "learners" to whom an employer recognises some sort of responsibility for teaching a trade, but simply as unskilled labourers or machine-minders, is rapidly increasing. And, as the unemployment figures all too clearly show, there is a growing disposition among employers, above all in the lighter trades, to take on a fresh supply of juvenile labour year after year, and to discharge each batch of workers as soon as their labour becomes seriously more costly than that of entrants to industry fresh from the schools.

These tendencies are, of course, simply one particular aspect of the growing mechanisation of industry. In many of the older trades, the proportion of skilled to less skilled labour has been very rapidly reduced, and is still falling very fast to-day. And nearly all the newer trades which are absorbing large amounts of labour employ a very high proportion of less skilled workers, and tend to use juveniles for more and more of the lighter tasks.

Moreover, the problem is by no means confined to productive industries. It is even more formidable in the distributive trades, which have in recent years absorbed the largest number of new entrants to wage-earning employment. The distributive trades employ a higher proportion of juvenile to adult workers than any important productive industry; and they employ these young workers, on the whole, under even worse conditions. In industry proper, the hours of labour are for the most part limited by Trade Union action, which has established standards to which even non-union firms have often to confirm; and even where such standards do not apply the Factory Acts afford some sort of protection. But in the distributive trades, and in a wide range of miscellaneous occupations outside the scope of the Factory Acts, hardly any protection exists. It is true that, subject to many qualifications, the Shops Act which came into full force this year has at last laid down for juveniles a maximum working week of forty-eight hours in the distributive trades; but the allowances for overtime and other exceptions are so extensive, and the means of enforcement so scanty, that the Act has so far not done much towards improving the position. Apart from this, the distributive trades, with their excessive proportion of juvenile labour, remain the worst of all blind-alley occupations.

This largely explains the prevalence of unemployment in these trades, despite the great increase of late years in the total numbers employed. Under present conditions, the more the distributive trades expand the more unemployment they generate; for every expansion causes them to take on, and subsequently to discharge into the labour market, more and more juveniles. These unfortunates, having served some years as cheap labour in a highly prosperous industry, are flung forth when they have lost their chance of acquiring skill in any other trade, and are forced thereafter to compete at a serious disadvantage in the market for unskilled labour.

All these facts are well known; and yet almost nothing is done to deal with them. Employers, in a boom like the present, are quick enough to complain of the shortage of adequately trained workers; but they energetically resist, in most industries, every attempt to bring either the institution of apprenticeship, or the recruitment of juvenile labour in general, under any sort of collective control.

The situation is, of course, made worse by the extraordinary provisions for exemption on account of "beneficial employment" allowed under the Education Act. For, when the definition of what is "beneficial" is left to each separate local education authority, very wide differences of practice are bound to arise, and authorities which attempt to consider the children's long-run interests are bound to be subjected to almost irresistible pressure. What authority will dare to condemn any of the principal occupations in its area as a "blind-alley" occupation, and therefore not "beneficial" in the terms of the Act? A real raising of the school age without exemption would have helped greatly towards solving the whole problem by creating a relative scarcity of juvenile labour, and thus raising the individual bargaining power of parents and children even in the absence of collective organisation. But even that has been denied; and the drive towards increasing exploitation of juvenile labour, based on the mechanisation of more and more industrial processes, has been allowed to go on unchecked.

If anyone is disposed to regard this picture of the present condition of juvenile labour as overdrawn, his scepticism will hardly survive a reading of Mr. John Gollan's recent survey of the position of youth in British industry,* with its array of facts and figures drawn mainly from official sources. He will find for example that nearly 42 per cent. of all the shop assistants in England and Wales are under 21 years of age, and that the percentage of distributive workers who are unemployed rises very sharply at 18 or 19. He will find that, in the building, engineering and many other trades, a sharp fall is occurring in the proportion of apprenticed to unapprenticed workers, and that the textile, shipbuilding, and other industries have become blind-alley occupations on account of the declining numbers employed. He will be left in no doubt that the consequence of mechanisation in the new industries, as well as of decline in the old, is to increase the range of "blind-alley" employment, or that the intensity of work demanded of juveniles has increased as they have come to be used more and more for repetitive operations on machines where speed is independent of the operator's control. And he will be left asking himself whether a nation which simultaneously reduces very rapidly the opportunities for all-round training in craft skill and throws more and more of its workers out of the jobs they have learnt almost as soon as they have learnt them, is really making good use of its economic opportunities even from the standpoint of profit-making.

Youth and its employment constitute a problem—one of the most serious social problems of our day—not only in the depressed areas, where of course the situation is worst of all, but over the whole country and over a wide range of industries and occupations. It is a problem that needs looking at, not only piecemeal, but also as a whole—in its relation both to the structure of industry and the content of existing industrial legislation, and to the educational system. It deserves and imperatively requires comprehensive inquiry. And the growing unrest among the young workers, exemplified by the troubles on the Clyde, in Lancashire, and in certain of the coalfields at a time when Trade Unionism is in general remarkably quiet, shows that a growing section of the victims is becoming conscious of what is happening, and indisposed to acquiesce in it without a struggle. It will help, up to a point, if the Trade Unions take the matter up seriously, and are able to exact from the employers the right to bargain collectively on behalf of the young workers; for in our view anyone who is old enough to be employed is also old enough to possess industrial rights. But Trade Union action can touch at present only a small part of the problem; for the worst conditions exist where the Trade Unions are weakest—above all in the distributive trades. In these cases the responsibility rests upon society as a whole, and calls for legislative action to govern the conditions of entry and employment, and to impose restrictive conditions on trades which batten on the exploitation of juvenile labour in blind-alley jobs. On such an issue it should

* *Youth in British Industry*. By John Gollan. *Gollancz*. 6s.

be possible to arouse the social conscience; and we should like to see the various organisations interested in the welfare of youth collaborating closely with the Trade Unions and the educational bodies to bring the full facts to light.

# SPAIN AND THE LEAGUE

[In this article, Señor del Vayo, formerly Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Republican Government and now Spain's principal delegate at the League Assembly, discusses the civil war and the attitude of the Powers.]

IN the recent deliberations at Geneva the interest of the Spanish public was concentrated on the Sixth Committee, which passed for submission to the Assembly a resolution affirming the failure of non-intervention, the presence of "foreign army corps on Spanish soil," and the intention of League members "in the near future" to consider "ending the policy of non-intervention" failing complete withdrawal of non-Spanish combatants. The war has converted every Spaniard fighting under the Republican flag into a minor expert on international affairs. I have known more than one foreign visitor amazed at the knowledge and the shrewd judgment with which, in the trenches, the latest debate in the House of Commons or one of the cynical outbursts of the *Popolo d'Italia* was discussed in his presence. The humblest peasant in the People's Army knows only too well that his destiny is not being decided in Spain alone. He learns his lesson from the telegrams from London or Paris. Constant petitions reach the Commissariat of War (which counts among its various functions that of doing away with illiteracy, and which carries on its cultural work in the very firing line) that preference be given to the information service from abroad. The news from abroad is the news which awakens the greatest interest at the front. Burgos or Salamanca does not count. The soldier of the Republic has adapted geography to his clear sense of reality. For months now the two great rebel capitals for him are Rome and Berlin, and Rome is the greater of the two.

With that concentrated attention which is felt by a man who realises that besides the enemy in front of him there are other forces which are influencing his destiny from afar, the Spanish people followed the progress of the resolution which after so severe a contest was adopted by the Sixth Committee. That in the final phase the verdict was formally annulled in the Assembly, by the vote of two judges so impartial and of such high moral authority as Albania and Portugal, in no way changed their appreciation of the importance of the resolution.

The political value and the force of the resolution on the Spanish question passed by the Sixth Committee lie in the support which it received from the Powers which are honestly engaged in the policy of non-intervention, especially the United Kingdom and France. The text of the resolution was naturally not what the Spanish delegation would have wished. The Spanish representative on the Drafting Committee, inspired with that desire for international collaboration which has always prompted Spain in the part she has played at Geneva, made the greatest concessions in order to reach unanimity. It was predominantly an Anglo-French text. Later this was evidenced by the determination with which the British and French delegates defended it in the Sixth Committee against the attacks of the spokesmen for the so-called totalitarian States. No one can seriously claim that the two opposing votes of Albania and Portugal release those Governments which most directly co-operated in the elaboration of the resolution from the solemn pledge which they contracted before the League and the world.

The whole essence of the resolution lay in the expression "in the near future." The Spanish claim that, in view of the failure of non-intervention there should be an immediate return to international law and the Covenant, was subordinated to the wish of the British and French Governments that there should not be the slightest obstacle to the negotiations which were to be initiated in Rome. But the representatives both of France and of the United Kingdom had to recognise that their experience of what occurred in previous months fully justified the special interest felt by the Spanish delegation that there should be no doubt of any kind as to the interpretation given to the words "in the near future." On this occasion there was no intention of allowing the delaying tactics of those who wish to gain time, in order to confront the Powers loyally supporting the policy of non-intervention with fresh *faits accomplis*, to produce their disastrous results.

With their eyes fixed on the resolution of the Sixth Committee and on the obligations expressly contracted therein by the British and French Governments, the Spanish public have followed the negotiations in Rome.

The Italian reply has caused no surprise whatsoever in Spain. Since the plan to end the war in the North so that the Italian army operating there could be diverted against Madrid or Aragon has failed, thanks to the splendid resistance of the Asturians, the one hope of the rebels is the arrival of fresh Italian divisions. In Asturias the losses suffered by the invading army have been severe. It is absolutely necessary to make good those losses with fresh contingents from Italy. Whilst these arrive, time must be gained—a few weeks. There is no more suitable place for gaining time than the London Committee.

To have allowed the question to be referred to the London Committee shows, in the first place, a complete lack of seriousness on the part of France and England. It must not be forgotten that it was universally realised that the joint approach made to Italy with the object of initiating tripartite negotiations was explained by the failure of the work of the London Committee. What will remain of the confidence and respect which the diplomacy of these two great countries has traditionally enjoyed, now that a mere suggestion of Italy, discounted by everyone, has proved sufficient to overthrow what appeared to be a firm and considered decision?

Besides this, however, acceptance of the London Committee means the acceptance of its slow and complicated machinery and procedure. One is conscious, therefore, of innocence if not of hypocrisy in the talk about fixing short and definite periods of time. No; everybody knows only too well that such periods of time are not compatible with the procedure of the Committee. Once the question is referred to the Committee, how can the French representative object, for instance, to the plan established by the experts of all the members of the Committee being taken as a basis for deliberation? And would it then be reasonable to object to the members of the Committee being given the opportunity to make observations? And in that case, and since it is a very detailed and complicated plan, can the examination of amendments, additions, suppressions, etc., be limited? Therein lies the peril of the return to the Committee, as the painful experience of a year has shown. And let us not be deceived; those who lack that minimum of firmness and decision necessary to uphold a point of view which the world had the right to consider as the result of a well-planned resolution, will not, in a situation falsified by their initial weakness, subsequently develop the necessary firmness and energy to destroy what constitutes the very nature of the Committee—its capacity for procrastination. A return to the Committee means putting, or rather keeping, the game in the hands of Italy and Germany.

The approaching winter weighs heavily on both sides. Twice as heavily on the rebels. Their morale will not hold out against the sacrifices of which the Republican population has given such abundant proof. In Madrid there will be another winter with little food and no coal; with more houses destroyed and fewer windows to keep out the cold than last winter. For all this the population of Madrid has to thank the policy of non-intervention and the admirable calm and the parsimoniousness of European diplomacy. But the realisation of its heroism and its impregnability gives Madrid the necessary courage to resist.

The sight of a country more united with its Government than ever before—I should like to draw attention to the article

of the *Times* correspondent in Valencia published on October 7th—and of an army increasing daily in numbers and efficiency, helps them to endure many things. The statement made in the Cortes that Spain is manufacturing large numbers of aeroplanes and that the war industry has in the last three months improved to an extraordinary extent, was received even in the most advanced positions of the front with resounding applause.

Faced with the cruel example of Bilbao, Catalonia is giving invaluable assistance by her ever closer collaboration in the conduct of the war. On the military side this is seen in the radical change that has taken place on the Aragon front. In the political domain the transfer of the Spanish Government to Barcelona will put an end to all rumours regarding a latent conflict between Barcelona and Valencia.

Among the rebels, on the other hand, the process of political disintegration increases in ratio to the extension of the invasion. A new feeling of patriotism and of hatred towards those who act in Spanish territory not as allies but as masters, corrodes the enemy lines. Besides the old differences between the Spanish rebel generals, there is now a further rivalry, which takes the form of disputes as to who is the least anti-Spanish. The test is to see who can speak worst of the Italian and German command.

Every rebel attempt at forming something that resembles a "National Government" has failed by reason of the antagonisms which make the Phalangists mortal enemies of the Carlists; the Carlists enemies of the Germans trying to de-Catholicise Spain; the Franquists enemies of the Queipoists; and the suffering Spanish people in the rebel zone the mortal enemy of them all.

Since last May when the League Council adopted what was up to then its one practical resolution—the withdrawal of non-Spanish combatants—the duration of the international war on Spanish soil could have been considerably shortened, with a great saving of life, if only the aggressor States had not been allowed to waste six precious months.

Spain now hopes that the British and French Governments will not incur the responsibility of making the "near future" a further diplomatic fiction. In the minds of the principal authors of the Geneva resolution, to judge from their statements, the negotiations initiated in Rome meant the last chance for non-intervention. If they failed, non-intervention would collapse from its own weight, the French frontier would be opened and the Spanish Government would once again enjoy the rights to which it is entitled under the Covenant and according to international law. Either the immediate withdrawal of volunteers or the end of non-intervention.

Nyon proved that it was possible to put an end to a situation which the immense majority of men and women in Europe consider as incongruous as it is intolerable, and which is responsible for the terrible bloodshed in Spain, without running the risk of a general war. But hardly were the successful protagonists of Nyon convinced that it was possible to inaugurate a policy which did not consist in reducing the struggle against aggression to a situation where the aggressor declared his willingness to fight against himself, than, terrorised by their own success, they hastened to ensure the collaboration in anti-piracy measures of Pirate No. 1.

Are they again going to consider the Italian reply as justifying endless talks? After all, some will say, even with a hundred per cent. negative reply we can continue conversations. Conversations, yes. For weeks and months, until the arrival in Spain of a hundred thousand more Italians changes the topic of conversation and gives it a more fascinating turn. It will then no longer be a matter of withdrawing 150,000 men, but of working to a larger scale. It remains to be seen if on reaching the quarter of a million mark Rome will become more accommodating. But for that it is essential to do away with what now serves as a grave reminder of the solemn obligations contracted by the United Kingdom and France—the resolution of Geneva.

JULIO ALVAREZ DEL VAYO

## THIS ENGLAND

**Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to Mr. F. J. Lyons.**

**All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.**

**Extracts should not be sent without their context. The article or passage should be sent in full with the proposed excerpt marked.**

A West End operatic society has banned *The Geisha* as a protest against Japanese methods in China.—*Star.*

The hypocritical sob-stuff of the Archbishop of Canterbury and his co-meddlers who supported the Albert Hall meeting in their pursuance of a most war-provoking piece of interference with Japan is, to say the least of it, disgusting. Why should civilians not be slaughtered? To pretend that civilians are a lot of innocent victims who look on while the murderous soldiery do the slaughtering is utter bunkum.—Letter in *Western Morning News.*

At the moment the future of Shanghai does not look particularly bright, and whatever the outcome of the Sino-Japanese struggle it must be a long time before the social, to say nothing of the commercial, life of the Port can recover. But if peace ever comes again it is sure that the Hunt will be one of the first activities of the European community to be put on its feet again.—*Riding.*

The bride's father is proprietor of an old-established meat business . . . the bride wore a gown of white satin fashioned with short leg-of-mutton sleeves and worn to long kid gloves.—*Yorkshire Evening Post.*

The Church of the Annunciation, lying in the southern quarter, is built on the foundations of a crusader's shrine, and is one of the sights of Nazareth, the town that has suddenly leapt into the news with the murder of the British officials.—*Sphere.*

Mr. Chislett said the Club provided scope for weighing controversial questions of social and political interest in the clear light of knowledge and without the rancour and bias of party politics. Membership of the Club is open to anyone not belonging to an organisation hostile to the National Government.—*Rotherham Express.*

During Monday's ceremony, when Gracie Fields was the centre of attraction, there were many who sought her autograph, but few obtained it in such a novel way as Mr. W. P. Boht, the manager, whom she obliged by writing her name on the front of his dress shirt! He will never wear it again, for it is one of his most prized possessions, and to wash it would immediately destroy its value. Nevertheless, he has been kind enough to lend it to the *News*, and we will display it in the window of our offices in Chester Street from to-day (Saturday), and during business hours all next week.—*Birkenhead News.*

## COTTAGE PIE

MY friend, Norman, having bought an Elizabethan cottage on a village green, is excessively pleased with it and naturally wishes all his friends to go down and see it and praise it to him. Hearing him talking about it, you could scarcely tell whether he was prouder of the age and appearance of the house or of the fact that it is provided with all the modern conveniences—electric light, an electric cooking-stove in the kitchen, and an electrically heated drum in the bathroom to assure a supply of hot water. "Perfect" is the word that is most constantly on the lips both of himself and of his wife, and their shining eyes bear witness to the sincerity of their speech.

I accepted an invitation to spend a week-end with them, though Norman explained: "Of course, we're not really fixed in yet. Everything's in rather a mess still." When I arrived, the sun was shining, and the house certainly looked very beautiful, with its steep roof, mainly of Horsham slate, and house-leeks growing above the eaves. A romantic little cottage, with its tiny windows—"like a witch's house in a wood," as Norman's wife put it. As she led me inside, she

said, " Mind your head," and indeed, I had to duck hurriedly in order to avoid knocking my head against the beam above the door. " Norman's working in the bathroom," she said; " there seems to be something wrong with the water-supply." I found Norman gazing in a state of distress at a small trickle of water flowing out of a tap and intermittently shooting out greasy little blobs of stuff that looked like fragments of scum from a stagnant pond. And, as each blob fell, it stuck gelatinously, staining the bath, and could be removed only with much hard labour. " I'm afraid you won't get much of a bath in the morning," said Norman; " and the worst of it is Uncle George is coming, too, and Uncle George is a glutton for baths." I stooped in order to inspect the extraordinary contents of the water, and, as I resumed an erect position after the inspection my head made its first contact with the fine old Elizabethan beam that runs across the bathroom ceiling. It was a nasty crack, but I made light of it, as did Norman and Norman's wife. " It takes time," they said, " to get used to these old houses."

At that moment, the sound of a car stopping outside the gate announced the arrival of Uncle George, and we all went out to greet him. He was a tall old man, terribly healthy-looking and hearty, with cheeks that shone like apples above his white beard. He beamed ecstasy through his gold-rimmed spectacles. " Beautiful! " he cried; " a Rackham cottage! " " Oh, better than Rackham," said Norman disappointedly, for he expects a trowel to be used—and a gold trowel at that—when his cottage is spoken of. " The cottage of one's dreams! " continued Uncle George. " Mind your head," said Norman's wife. But the warning came too late. Uncle George, with his hat off, had well and truly crashed his head into the beam above the door of the cottage of his dreams. With a ghastly smile he said it didn't matter and we all assured him that it took time to get used to these old places. " Oh," said Uncle George with a complacent laugh, " I know my way about these old cottages. I know my way about these old cottages," he repeated with another laugh. But the apples in his cheeks had faded slightly.

" We've put you in there," said Norman's wife, opening the door of a bedroom just off the sitting-room. " But you'll have to be very careful not to bump your head against the ceiling." The ceiling was, indeed, very low, with beams running across it and coming down lower still. No one more than five-and-a-half feet high could have felt quite safe standing straight up in it. After his crash, Uncle George entered the room in a crouching attitude. " Couldn't be better," he said, enthusiastically. " And what a comfortable-looking divan! You have perfect taste, my dear," he said to Norman's wife. He then agreed that he would like a wash before tea, and, before he had been in the bathroom long, a loud and unseemly oath told us that Uncle George's head had come into contact with the beam. " Be careful," Norman called out to him. " It's all right, my dear fellow," Uncle George called back; " I didn't realise the beam was there." And he began singing " Drink to Me Only," as he dried his face, to assure himself of his high spirits.

" By Jove," he said, emerging, " what a convenient little cottage! A bathroom and everything! All the advantages of the old world and the new! " And he went into his bedroom to brush his hair and get ready for tea. Now in that bedroom it is not safe to brush one's hair unless one is in a kneeling position. If one stands up, and makes a sweeping movement with the comb, one's hand almost inevitably strikes a beam and gets badly grazed. To judge by Uncle George's language, he had forgotten to kneel. It flowed from him in a pure, but variegated stream. I gathered from the contents of his oaths that he was a polytheist, for he far outstripped Lars Porsena in the number of gods by—or at—whom he swore. He seemed to associate each individual beam in the ceiling with a different deity, and he was cursing them all indiscriminately. His head was by this time, I could guess, bloody but unbowed, but it was bloody only because he kept it unbowed. Nevertheless, when he came out of the room he was smiling determinedly and beatifically. " After tea," he said, " we must see to that stuff in the bath water. I think it's just a matter of filling the cistern and getting rid of it."

After eating three triangles of chocolate cake, he rose with a cry of " All hands to the pump! " and went into the kitchen to work the pump. Norman said: " Let me do it "; but Uncle George said that he liked the exercise, and we could hear him working away at the pump-handle and singing " Pull for the Shore, Sailor " in a hearty, humorous way. We had begun to think and to talk of other things when suddenly we heard a noise of splashing water, like rain falling in bucketsful, from the bathroom. " Good gracious! " said Norman's wife, " I forgot I was warned that the cistern overflows if you fill it too full." " Stop! " shouted Norman to Uncle George; " you've flooded the bathroom." And we all went into the bathroom and saw water pouring out of a kind of tank—a flow that none of us knew how to stop—and the water already an inch deep on the floor, which was luckily on a lower level than the sitting-room. " I'm very sorry," said Uncle George; " let's turn on all the taps," and he turned them all on.

He eyed the bath ponderingly. Then, " I know how to get rid of all that greasy stuff," he said with conviction. " Let's heat the water in the drum, and give the stuff a real sousing with boiling water." Now, none of us knew anything about electricity, but Uncle George said he knew. Unfortunately, he turned on a switch before he put in some plug or other, and, as he put in the plug, there was a flare, like the flashlight photographers use; and Norman rushed out and turned on all the switches in the other rooms to see whether Uncle George had fused—or whatever you call it—all the lights in the house. He had. And, apparently, he had affected the electric lighting in the village, for, when the electrician called round to fix things, villager after villager, came in pursuit of him to say that their lights had unaccountably gone out.

Uncle George was a little contrite till the light was restored, but, after a hearty dinner and two pints of beer, he was his old self again. He sat in an armchair and beamed, and looked round the room and praised the cottage in superlatives that must have seemed almost adequate even to Norman. " A little Paradise," he called it, and, when he had exhausted his vocabulary, he said—for he was a restless old man—that he would go out for " a breather " in the garden. After a few minutes, he returned to say that it was a perfectly beautiful night, that he had seen Cassiopeia and the Pleiades, and suggested that I should come out and see them, too. Being a lover of the Pleiades, I went out with him, both of us ducking as we went. The night, though starry, was almost pitch-black, and one had to feel one's way along the garden path with one's feet, Uncle George enthusiastically talking about the stars and saying that it was a pity that Orion's Belt wasn't yet visible. Now, along the side of the house runs a shallow dry moat, with a stone edge rising two inches above the level of the ground where the path crossed it. Uncle George was just in the middle of an enthusiastic display of his astronomical knowledge, when his foot came in contact with the stone, and the next thing I knew he was lying on his back in the moat with his legs in the air. " Are you all right? " I called out to him. " Splendid! Splendid! " he called back from the bottom of the moat. " I say," he said, as I helped him to his feet, " this has been an eventful day."

In the morning he agreed to take breakfast in bed, and I carried the tray in to him. There he was lying on the divan with his bare feet projecting a foot beyond the end of the bed. I asked him how he had slept. He said that there seemed to be a tilt in the floor which made the bed-clothes constantly fall off, and that, owing to the shortness of the bed, he had to sleep with his feet in an icy draught, so that he had had rather a broken night of it. " But you can't have everything," he said. " You must be prepared to put up with a little discomfort in a beautiful old place like this. And isn't it worth it? " he asked heroically. " Isn't it worth it? " T.Y.

# SEX, MARRIAGE AND MATERNITY

THE problems of sex, marriage and parenthood cannot satisfactorily be treated as though they were one and the same. Before we are half-way through our teens, our sex physiology has attained nearly to full ripeness. There are then manifest powerful urges, conscious and subconscious, impelling us to coitive union with a member of the opposite sex. What are we, as an organised society, to do or to plan about it? There are all sorts of options—boy-and-girl marriages, "free-love," social tabus, legal penalties, and so on.

With regard to one of these possible options, there is common among many of our pseudo-intellectuals a misconception as to the effects of tabus and of repression. When we submit to a tabu in which we do not believe, or to a conventional prejudice which we do not share, then we may reasonably expect all the unhappiness and mental disorders that commonly result from cowardice. But self-restraint and voluntary self-repression, so far from being social or hygienic evils, would seem to be at the back of all civilisation and all progress. "It was not Casanova but Dante who produced an immortal poem—no restraint, then no love, but only lust." Even the Puritans, whom, in his latest book, *Captain Ludovici brackets with the Feminists, have proved themselves far from sterile—biologically or spiritually.

The sex forces of adolescence are, however, not usually such as have more than temporary compulsiveness—they would form a poor basis for a life-long marriage. Yet Captain Ludovici argues, in my opinion with considerable cogency, that the middle and late teens are the ideal period of her life for a woman or girl to bear her first child. The satisfaction of the sexual instinct is, in man, usually fairly complete with the termination of the coitive act. This is not the case with the majority of women, in whom full sexual satisfaction ends only many months after the birth of the child resulting from sex congress. Captain Ludovici contends that man and woman are unlike one another, that the rules and conventions applicable to the one are not appropriate to the other, that there is very little psychic overlapping, and that the chief business of woman is to produce children, and plenty of them, and to enjoy doing it.

One of the great publicity stunts of the moment is concerned with maternal mortality—that is, with the deaths of women in childbirth. Doctors and sociologists alike have, for decades, been racking their brains to discover plausible explanations of the refusal of the maternal mortality rate to fall to anything like the same extent as have fallen, in the last quarter of a century, the general death rate and the fatality rate of surgical operations. According to their several prejudices, the champions of every social, political and medical creed have put forward their respective explanations. In the face of evidence demonstrative of the lower maternal mortality rates that have for decades obtained in Stepney and in Finsbury, as compared with those of Hampstead and of Kensington, Socialists continue to argue that poverty, the absence of skilled attention, and unavoidable uncleanliness are the prime factors involved; the gynaecological specialists, in the face of equally conflicting evidence, persistingly urge that the trouble is attributable to the disparity between the competence of the ordinary doctor and the ordinary midwife, on the one hand, and the specialised skill of themselves. Facts and figures lend small support to any of these theses.

And now along comes Captain Ludovici, with no professional axe to grind, no political party to furnish with ammunition, though possibly with more than a few bees in his bonnet.

Most people, certainly most doctors and nurses, take it for granted that childbirth usually involves pain to the mother, and at least some element of risk. Even in the time of Isaiah, it seems that "a woman with child, that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pains"; and so it is, according to the experience of every practising doctor, with nine women out of ten to-day. But Captain Ludovici, with true nineteenth-century sentimentalism, would have us believe that, for "normal" women, childbirth is not only without danger, but is in itself highly pleasurable. To quote the words of a lady doctor whose "letter to the author" prefaces this book—childbirth "is fun, breathless and exciting like bathing in a rough sea." I have been present at the births of several thousand babies, and my heart is still not sufficiently hardened, and my instinctive sympathy not sufficiently atrophied, to enable me to share Captain Ludovici's vicarious delight in the pleasures of parturition.

But, useful, because of its provocativeness, and possibly all the more because of its narrowness of outlook, as I think Captain Ludovici's book to be, neither his enthusiasm, nor the air with which he brings before us an enormous mass of figures and quotations, ought to blind us to the limitation and spiritual crudity of his sociological basis. Like Tennyson's Nature, and our contemporary European dictators, he attaches little importance to the individual, and seems to think only in terms of race or species.

Modern life is made interesting and endurable by the fact that there are so many different sorts of men and so many different sorts of women. We have moved a long way from those days when we asked nothing more of life and of one another than opportunity of satisfying our simple biological appetites. Here I am going to draw Captain Ludovici's attention to a very wise and very witty sociological work that may not have come his way: Mr. C. K. Munro's *The True Woman*. Mr. Munro's view is not antithetic to that of Captain Ludovici—but it is wholesomely corrective. I will quote a passage relevant to what I have been talking about. "One of the things that man seems to have been really successful at in the last hundred years is the augmentation of material wealth and resources. By this means he has raised the standard of living and relaxed the pressure of environment to an extent possibly undreamed of previously. A consequence of this rise in the standard means that there is to-day a larger class of persons than ever before who are out of the region of struggle. And the recent tendency among the middle classes to restrict the family has made their number larger still. The result has been, among such people, to revolutionise the idea of companionship. It is no longer a question of companionship in adversity and difficulty, but in prosperity and ease; no longer a question of companionship in struggle and desperation, but in pleasure and contemplation. . . . If there is one essential conclusion to be drawn from this argument, it is that the 'true woman'—at any rate, in so far as she is nothing but a 'true woman'—can never be a companion in this modern sense. . . . The 'true woman' is primitive, and primitive struggle is her element. . . ."

One of the results of civilisation, especially of so-called Christian civilisation, has been the emergence of a large number of men and women possessed of individual characteristics—physical, aesthetic, intellectual and spiritual—having no particular or obvious species-survival value. In such communities as those of the bees and the ants, "useless" individuals of this sort would have small chance of survival. It is apparently the desire of serious Fascists, Nazis, and not a few Communists, that the human societies of the future shall be similarly freed from contamination by such biologic ineffectives. "Feminist" is for Captain Ludovici the cursed word that represents what he considers to be the pathologic urge towards individuality and self-expression. The real issue that he raises, either consciously or unconsciously, is whether human life is rightly to be assessed according to an individual or to a species scale of values. Are we to consider ourselves as having significance or importance only in so far as we fit in with what seems to the scientists to be the biological scheme; or are we to accept the Christian doctrine that some measure of divinity is incarnate in us, and that, consequently, we should to some extent regard ourselves as individual

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* *The Truth About Childbirth.* By Anthony M. Ludovici. *Kegan Paul.* 10s. 6d.

expressions or manifestations of the divine purpose, endowed with idealising faculties whereby it is our duty and privilege to steer our course. To quote Poul Bjerre : " He who depends altogether on the providence of God does not always find himself on the safe side." Captain Ludovici's philosophy is one of " Jam yesterday, jam to-morrow, but never jam to-day." Each generation of women, it seems, is to accept as its only important function that of producing children who will constitute the next generation ; who, in turn, will devote their lives and sacrifice their personal inclinations to the concentrated task of producing a further generation, and so on, *ad infinitum*.

Personally, I think that it would be a good thing, physically, and probably emotionally, if the general age of first child-bearing were materially lowered. I would not go so far as Captain Ludovici, who characterises the woman of twenty-three, for the first time pregnant, as " relatively senile." On the other hand, if we are determined—and the mass of opinion seems to insist on it—to go on with the institution of the family, although its economic foundations have been destroyed by the industrial revolution and large-scale industry, it seems clear to me that marriage and parenthood will have to be treated as presenting two problems only in part overlapping. The state of being in love is the decent emotional accompaniment of coitive union. The state of friendship, affection, respect and open-eyed admiration is the only possible emotional and rational basis for successful marriage.

HARRY ROBERTS

# Correspondence

## THE SLUMP

SIR,—Your leading article this week, " The Wheels Slow Down," is extraordinarily interesting. And, if a humble supporter of the capitalist system may venture to say so, your diagnosis of the cause of the recent violent slump in both commodities and stocks is absolutely correct. Up to a point cheap money and a consumer demand, artifically expanded by relief expenditure, stimulated recovery in the United States. But without any proportionate revival of investment in the capital goods industries, this recovery could not possibly continue. De-stocking or, as you call it, negative investment, has recently developed on a very considerable scale ; and, if it continues, will fling not only America but the whole world back into another economic crisis of the first order.

It is, I think, common ground between us that, in the present critical phase of international relationships, an economic slump would be disastrous for the democratic nations.

In the early stages the Fascist States would find themselves, to some extent, insulated against the shock of acute depression, owing to their closed and ruthlessly controlled economic systems. Later on, when the trend of events had made world war an absolute certainty, they would find themselves relatively stronger, from an economic point of view, than they are to-day. In these circumstances, since neither the Government of the United States nor that of this country contemplates introducing a socialist régime, your question, " Can capitalism succeed in smoothing out the threatened depression ? " acquires an immense importance. As against 1929, money is cheap, gold is plentiful, and there is as yet no great glut of commodities—and these factors are definitely encouraging. The answer to this question is therefore surely, " Yes, if confidence can be restored."

I believe that the recent slump in prices, which—as you point out—has already resulted in the destruction of paper wealth to the tune of thousands of millions, has been deliberately and artificially induced by the Government of the United States, with the acquiescence, if not the connivance, of the British Government. It is, I should imagine, the first time this has happened in the economic history of the world. Wittingly or unwittingly the authorities in Washington set out last March to destroy confidence. They have succeeded beyond their wildest dreams. London has made no counter-move. And now the outlook for the immediate future is ominous indeed. How did they do it ? There was, of course, the underlying international tension, accompanied by the sporadic outbreak of undeclared wars, which gave them a good background to work on. But strained international relations are not the main cause of the recession any more than re-armament was the main cause of the previous recovery. The first blow was struck by President Roosevelt himself when he suddenly announced that commodity prices were too high. If you take currency devaluation into account, they were in fact considerably lower than the level of 1926. which had hitherto been his declared objective. Next, and far more serious, was the famous (or infamous) " gold scare," which was allowed to continue unchecked both in Washington and London for several weeks on end. Surely by this time our " money-managers " might have learnt that the surest way to undermine public confidence is to bring the intrinsic value of the currency into question. In this particular case there was no reason whatever for doing so ; and a simple declaration that the Federal Reserve Bank or the Bank of England, or preferably both, would continue to purchase gold would have nipped this scare in the bud at the outset. The British Government then took a hand in the merry game of producing a slump by presenting the first version of the N.D.C. And then it was President's Roosevelt's turn again, with further and greater threats against the Supreme Court and the public utilities, and ever tighter restrictions on the stock markets.

You, Sir, hit the nail plumb on the head when you say that it looks as though President Roosevelt's attempt to " kick American capitalism into prosperity " has failed. No one denies that many reforms in the United States were and are, overdue. Wall Street had to be cleaned up. The banking system had to be pulled into some sort of order. A decent system of social services ought to have been inaugurated by this time, and a decent Federal Civil Service to administer them. The complaint of those who, like the present writer, most sincerely admire the President's ultimate objectives is not that he has tried to carry through a radical policy, but that he has done it in the wrong way. There is something to be said for nationalising the public services. But there is nothing to be said for keeping the great consumers of capital goods, like the railways and the power companies, in a state of complete uncertainty, and subject to continuous threats, month after month and year after year. When all is said and done, President Roosevelt has not yet succeeded in giving his country a Federal Civil Service, or the social services, or the housing accommodation it requires and deserves. He has not even begun to count the unemployed ! Meanwhile the only other agencies, apart from the State, which could have confirmed and strengthened the economic recovery through the purchase of capital goods—the railways and the utilities—have not done so because they simply don't dare.

No doubt the recession which has begun in the United States, and which, if it continues, is bound to affect this country and all the other democracies of the world, could be checked by the announcement of a large additional rearmament programme. But this would only bring temporary relief. The lesson to be learnt from the disquieting and largely unnecessary events of the past few months is surely this. The Governments of democratic countries which do not intend to sweep away capitalism overnight must provide a basis of confidence, without which a capitalist system cannot hope to work. The greatest enemy of confidence is uncertainty. If you tell the ordinary working capitalist precisely what you are going to do, and stick to it, he can continue to function even although his activities are sharply circumscribed. But if you leave him in complete doubt and uncertainty as to the intentions ofthe Government with regard to the currency, the Budget, taxation, public utilities, wages and hours, etc. ; and if, on the top of that, you impose such restrictions on markets that it is practically impossible to deal freely or to raise fresh capital, you are simply inviting slump—and ultimate economic collapse.

House of Commons. ROBERT BOOTHBY

## PLEASE COME OFF THE FENCE

SIR,—The life of a parson who is convinced that his job at the present time is best accomplished by trying to persuade his fellow men to abjure war and embrace peace is a strange one. In the scant intervals when he is not addressing very large meetings of good-tempered people who are only too willing to listen and applaud and sometimes even too ready to put their names to a promise pledging them to take no further part in the infernal business ; or when he is not travelling hither and thither for the purpose of holding such meetings, he has the opportunity of seeing quite a number of people who may be described as fairly influential in the thinking world. And the strange thing about it is that almost without exception such people—I believe they may be envisaged as representative readers of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION—

say something like this : " Well of course, as a matter of fact, speaking for myself in my own private capacity, I entirely agree with you pacifists. We've got to get rid of war itself, and there's nothing else that's really worth talking about."

Then they go off and return to their own vocations ; and so far as active peace propaganda is concerned, are not heard of again. Some of them are journalists who depart to turn the good old handle of political advocacy, just as if the clouds that hang over Europe were not waiting to make nonsense of all their politic-refinements—waiting to raze their life's work to the ground as a typhoon spreads outhouses. Yet when one meets such people again, as I do, they are again quite ready to express their concern about the frightful state of the world, and their entire agreement with us about what is our first political need. Only nothing comes of it ! They seem to think it would be an exhibition of personal vanity to tell the world what they admit to me privately. So that life is rendered strange by living in a circle of friends with whom I agree and who genuinely agree with me, but who do not stand before the public as the people I know.

Of course I appreciate their difficulties. They are actively and responsibly engaged in social, political, and economic duties which do not leave them free to do what they like in the matter of a propaganda that is essentially radical, and socially unpopular. No man can put his job " up the spout " at a moment's notice if he has a wife and children dependent upon him. Moreover, I don't pretend that all these friends are in complete agreement with the Peace Pledge Union, either in the matter of emphasis, or in agreement as to the ways and means of getting us all out of the present slough of despond. All the same, I am perfectly certain that if these people could be persuaded to come out into the open and put their own convictions plainly before the world, the sum of their influence would be so great that the essential victory of peace would be assured.

Recent events in Abyssinia, Spain and China seem to me to be visions of horror cast upon a screen of time for the express purpose of giving the peoples of Europe indisputable evidence of what war has become. Now we know that war is plain blasphemy against life. Therefore apart from all political questions, apart even from the right and proper way in which the nations should try to secure ordered government, whether through Left or Right inclinations, whether through Sovereign States or the reforming of the League, or indeed any programme the wit of men can devise—apart from all that, what we know as plain decent human beings is that the activity of war itself has got to be abstained from if human society as we cherish it is to continue. The activity which is modern war is something so completely destructive and so damnable that each one of us knows in his bones that it must be foresworn. And we know it cannot come to an end so long as we are personally willing to do its bidding. Why then do we not attest at least the protestation that is in us ? Why not declare a personal renouncement of the thing itself ? Is it because so many of us have lost the sense of our own meaning and importance ? Is it because we say with false humility : " What does one count ? " Or is it because with equally false humility we believe it impossible to separate the individual from the society that sustains him ? Can we, in fact, not call our souls our own ?

Well, it is my belief that the Spirit of Life now requires of every man that he should call his soul his own and witness quite simply to the truth as he knows it in his inmost soul. I believe that only so can we vindicate the honour of God and redeem the world from misery incalculable. This is perhaps not a formula that appeals particularly to readers of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION ; but each man has his own representation of the truth as he sees it, and it will suffice. All I want to appeal for is this response from those who have hitherto had hopes that a way of avoiding war might be discovered through social and political means which did not entail their complete personal devotion and severance from the existing so-called " order." Pacifists must live within that " order " not as baffled idealists but debonair and courageous—as rebels against the world as it is. I only want those who know there's no hope in the direction we are going to say so with all the emphasis in their power. If they will, truly I believe the miracle of peace may even now be achieved.

H. R. L. SHEPPARD

## THE FASCIST MARCH

SIR,—Your Note last week on the Fascist Procession through South London seemed to me injurious to the cause of civil liberty. It ran : " Fascist processions are in a class by themselves. They are not ordinary legitimate propaganda, but deliberately provocative. Sir Oswald Mosley and his friends preach day in and day out the vilest anti-Semitism. They have already made a bear-garden of the East End, and it is intolerable that they should be allowed to direct their mischievous activities to other parts of London."

If any of your readers fail to recognise the voice in the above passage, let them substitute the word " Communist " for " Fascist," and " Revolution " for " Anti-Semitism." Then, the ring of " it is *intolerable* that they should be *allowed*, etc." will seem familiar enough. It is the voice of the old Enemy of Minorities who, of course, in favour of freedom, " draws the line at " mischievous propaganda and calls on the Government to stop it.

From my point of view and that of THE NEW STATESMAN the activities of Sir Oswald Mosley are pernicious, and his attacks on Jews, intended to supply the cement of hatred to his paltry party, are cowardly and contemptible. But that is neither here nor there. Have not the Communists, to their satisfaction as propagandists, often made a " bear-garden " of Hyde Park and of many a meeting ? Does THE NEW STATESMAN, on that account want them to be stopped marching with provocative banners and speaking their minds ? I wonder, Sir, if you will reply " Yes, if Communist propaganda, like Sir Oswald Mosley's, leads to breaches of the peace." I wonder ! That is, of course, an important consideration for those responsible for the preservation of order. But do you wish the Home Office to make that possibility the decisive factor whenever the question arises whether a meeting or demonstration is to be held or not ? Rows and broken heads are hideous things—the flint flung at Sir Oswald Mosley has reminded us of that ; but it would be a still more sinister thing if, up and down England, no meeting or procession were permitted which might lead to such incidents. If order and quiet, blessings though they be, were the *only* ends of good Government, Germany and Italy have (as they boast) attained the ideal. There are many supporters of the present Government who would be delighted to establish the principle that no propaganda shall be permitted which could possibly provoke disturbance. That in itself would be a triumph for Fascism. You cannot fight it with its own weapons ; nor can you ask for Government interference only against propaganda you regard as mischievous yourself. It leads to the same kind of State in the end, whether the discrimination demanded begins in favour of Labour or Capitalist propaganda—the State in which no one dares dissent. There is not much to chose between Hitler removing with a revolver his old comrades in revolution who disagree with him and Stalin's more gradual elimination of his supporters on the scaffold ; nor is there between their educational policies (securing unanimity by " conditioning " the minds of the young) a pin to chose. There is only one appeal that can be legitimately made to the Government by any party, that those who try to silence their opponents by force should be punished.

DESMOND MACCARTHY

[Mr. MacCarthy's argument is eloquent but misapplied. In maintaining the principles of liberty regard must surely be had, even in the most libertarian State, to realities. And the realities in this case are precisely what we said in the sentences he quotes at the beginning of his letter. The policy and behaviour of the Communist Party, however distasteful its propaganda may be to large numbers of people is not comparable with that of the Fascists who make a practice of throwing the vilest abuse at a racial minority. If they were equally provocative, we should be in favour of stopping Communist processions. —ED., *N.S. & N.*]

## MASS-OBSERVATION

SIR,—Mass-Observation began from a letter in your columns and has had frequent encouragement there. In the Autumn Books Supplement of last week, however, there was a long review on " Mass-Observation Day-Surveys " so misleading as to require an answer. It was by G. W. Stonier and it lies in the Mass-Observation files alongside a hack-written splutter from the reactionary *Evening News*, a lament in a provincial paper by one Maurice Wiggin who said he preferred Holman Hunt's " Light of the World " to Mass-Observation, and an elegant essay by Miss Dilys Powell, who said she preferred doodling. Mr. Stonier, more sophisticated, prefers Flaubert. In his preference he misses the point so completely that one is driven to seek a secondary motive for his hostility. Isn't it that Mr. Stonier feels that his own vested interest in literature is in danger ? Throughout his review he is complaining of the lack of " quality " in Mass-Observers' reports, a " quality " which no doubt distinguishes his own

exquisite volume of trivia. For Mr. Stonier, too, in his way, is an Observer—but not a *Mass*-Observer—a thousand times no.

We might have spared his numerous inaccuracies and exaggerations he has made about the work and ourselves. But we must ask a fair statement when he is actually offensive to mass-observers in general. In order to avoid any similar cheap cracks (or *quizzing*, to use his own word) on our part we will ask Mr. Stonier a few simple questions.

1. "We shall at least know a Madge and Harrisson man at sight . . . in general a loping walk, elephant ears, an eye trained to key-holes."

Will Mr. Stonier tell us on what grounds he states that there is any one Observer who fulfils any one of these qualifications? What has a loping walk to do with observing anything? Can he produce any evidence, however flimsy, that any observing is done through keyholes? Is there anything in our results that is not fair open comment of a kind no one need be ashamed of? We ask Mr. Stonier if he is not deliberately trying to make us out to be snooping Paul Prys.

Mr. Stonier forgets that he is being personally rude to real people. His fine sensibility apparently does not extend far enough to make him conscious of this. We might retort in kind about Mr. Stonier if he were not personally so inconspicuous that no one remembers ever having seen him. *His* ears are close to his head, *he* struts rather than lopes, *his* eye is trained into a gently speculative middle-distance. Is he, can he be, a Mass-Observer? No, a thousand times no.

2. "Why not admit that the quality and not the mass of observation is what counts, that one Flaubert, and even one Zola, is worth a million of Madge and Harrisson's rank and file?"

How did Mr. Stonier arrive at this evaluation of Flaubert and Zola? Why does he use the word "one" before each of them? Is this attitude consistent with a progressive weekly in a democratic country, and with the right of free speech? In using the word "worth" does he mean "worth" to himself or to the mass of people? Does he realise that the majority of Britishers have never heard of Flaubert or even Zola? What have Flaubert or even Zola got to do with it anyway? Did they ever observe the British? Aren't they both dead? Can they then help us with a Coronation Day-Survey? And must the mass wait for someone like that to write about them? In the meanwhile mayn't they write for themselves?

3. Finally mass-observers have "a mystical belief in the mob origin of their ideas, in mob infallibility, an absurdity. . . ."

Will Mr. Stonier explain how we believe in mob or any other infallibility? How has he decided that we have any mystical belief about it? Will he deny that if we have a thousand reports from the "mob" (does he mean to be contemptuous in his use of this word?) they constitute a thousand valid ideas that exist and are ignored by Mr. Stonier and literary weeklies of all sorts? Mr. Stonier is horrified that the FACT (his lettering) is given pre-eminence. Does he think that we can do without facts? That we have enough facts about everyday 1937 English life and thought? Most people are not so fortunate as he, who can apparently escape from the hard facts of 1937 civilisation into a complete satisfaction with the superiority of Flaubert or even Zola.

6 Grotes Buildings, CHARLES MADGE
Blackheath, S.E.3. TOM HARRISSON

[Mr. Stonier writes: "I am forming a Society to study Mass-Observers. Will those interested apply? Shadowing experience, flat ears, gentle eyes, etc., essential."—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

## ITALIAN FRONTIER DIFFICULTIES

SIR,—I have just completed a motor tour abroad which involved the crossing of various frontiers. The average time taken to complete the necessary formalities was from five to ten minutes, yet at the Brenner frontier, between Austria and Italy, we were delayed over an hour. It would be hard to imagine greater incompetence than that of the Italian officials. The cars were let through a barrier about six at a time; passports were carried off to some obscure office and chaos then ensued whilst a seething mob filled up money declaration forms which afterwards were apparently of no importance or interest to anyone. The whole place reeked of militarism. One poor man was so overcome that he removed a portion of the green paint from the barrier gate post, which earned him a round of abuse from some high official and six Blackshirts. The situation was adequately summed up by an Austrian garage proprietor some few hours later. "Ah, yes," he said, "here we have only two customs officials who do all the work, but there they have twenty or thirty officials who have to spend their time doing something . . . or nothing." I gather that various touring clubs have made representations to Mussolini, but they appear to have had little or no effect. Surely it is time that the Italians fell into line with the other countries by joining in a united effort to make foreign touring as attractive as it undoubtedly can be—when freed from the unnecessary red tape and mismanagement of suspicious frontier officials. R. E. F.

## CZECHOSLOVAK PAINTING

SIR,—The anonymous person whose notice of the Mayor Gallery's exhibition of modern Czechoslovak paintings which appeared in your issue of October 9th has, of course, every right to his or her opinion; but the opinion of somebody less blinkered and hasty would have been more interesting and less misleading.

To say of Josef Sima that to be called the leading Czechoslovak Surrealist is "an unenviable distinction" implies that either Czechoslovakian painting as such or all experimental painting on surrealist lines is condemned in advance. To say that nearly all the Czechoslovak artists represented at the Mayor Gallery "have learnt from France" is pointless: so have Picasso, Sickert, Duncan Grant, Barbara Hepworth, etc., etc. "Some of them . . . are unashamedly French": why should they be ashamed? And why should Josef Capek's paintings be disdained because they show the influence of a magnificent peasant culture? As for the remark that Capek's pictures are "unserious and almost perfunctory," it can only be the result of an unserious and perfunctory study of the pictures. Lastly, why does the writer of the notice twice mis-spell Capek's name, although it is spelt correctly in the catalogue from which he (or she) quotes? A small point, but one more sign of perfunctoriness.

It is a pity that readers of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION should not have before them the judgment of some less prejudiced and less perfunctory critic on what is, I believe, the first exhibition of modern Czechoslovak painting in this country. But perhaps many of them will go and see the paintings for themselves.

1 St. Andrew's Place, JONATHAN GRIFFIN
Regent's Park, London, N.W.1.

[Our critic has no prejudice against artists learning from France, still less against Czechoslovakia or its painters. He neither said nor implied that they ought to be ashamed of learning from France, though he does think that some of their pictures are not so much influenced by as directly imitated from Picasso. He does not disdain Capek's pictures because they reflect a peasant culture: he considers them pleasant but no pleasanter than much of the work produced by Miss Marian Richardson's pupils. It is agreeable to find that Czechoslovakia can produce pictures up to the average standard of the London Group; but a critic is not necessarily perfunctory or prejudiced because he misspells a name or cannot share the generous enthusiam which led Mr. Jonathan Griffin to organise the exhibition.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

## POLICEMEN IN ARMOUR

SIR,—A book-reviewer is entitled to criticise unfavourably, but not, surely, to misrepresent facts. Mr. Partridge may think what he likes about the criminal's motive in *Policeman in Armour*, and I am not upset, knowing that opinions differ about what constitutes adequate grounds for committing murder in fiction. Personally I dislike the school of thought which derides all such motives as weak unless they are gigantically strong, but Mr. Partridge apparently does not.

My real quarrel with him is on another matter, however. When, after vaguely classifying the book as "one of those time-table murders," he goes on to say: "Unfortunately for Mr. Penny, his solution does not correspond with his time-table," he is making what amounts to an accusation of unfair play, and this I emphatically protest against. The time-table in question does not pretend to record "the movements of everyone connected with the house": it merely tabulates their statements about those movements, which is an entirely different thing. Since one of the persons concerned is certainly the murderer, Mr. Partridge—for a professional detective-story reader—must have lapsed into singular depths of simplicity if he expected every statement to be true. A study of that time-table ought to assist considerably in determining the murderer, but there is no authority for implying that no other help is needed. If that were so, the explanation would begin on page 139 instead of on page 256.

I challenge Mr. Partridge to show in what respects the detective's solution fails to correspond with the undoubted facts of the case, or with the testimony, as set down in the time-table, of innocent

persons. If he is unable to do this, perhaps he will be generous enough to apologize for his accusation as publicly as he made it.

c/o The Crime Club, 48 Pall Mall, S.W.1. RUPERT PENNY

## QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY

SIR,—Mr. J. M. Hone's pleasant review of Dr. Lloyd Praeger's book (*The Way That I Went*) contains a trivial error in the statement that the Queen's University of Belfast is "near Belfast." This, of course, is an under-statement, for the University is in Belfast. Mr. Hone can be readily pardoned, however, when one considers the attitude of the responsible authorities in the North of Ireland, who, by their lack of adequate financial aid to the University, hardly seem to realise that "Queen's" is an integral part of the educational and cultural life of the whole of Ulster. A topographical error is of no importance when Ulster people themselves fail to realise the significance of their own University.

Clare College, Cambridge. J. D. BOYD (M.D., Belfast).

# Miscellany

## STUDY IN BLACK AND WHITE

"I SHOULDN'T run to chromium handles if I were you, sir," said the undertaker. "Cremation is costly enough as it is. And when you come to think, they'd really be a waste of money, wouldn't they?"

His estimate had already reached fifty pounds, so we decided on a plain deal coffin with brass handles.

"Well, that's that," he said with a gesture of finality, moving aside an empty tea-cup. Then he turned to me with a smile that seemed somehow to combine human sympathy with professional satisfaction. He had a short white beard, pink cheeks, and a ghastly set of porcelain teeth. White as the tea-cup, they were, and of uniform shape and size.

"I went down to the mortuary this morning," he whispered, as though he were telling a dirty joke. "And, my goodness, they were pleased to see me! He'd been lying there three days and—well, he was beginning to *change* . . . Of course, they've got an ice-slab and they do everything possible to keep the body sweet, but in this warm weather it's difficult, you know. There was a nigger down there who'd been fished out of the river . . . he was under glass. It's terrible when they've been in the water."

He paused. He must have realised that I was unable to share his impersonal interest in corpses, for he flushed a deeper pink.

"Well, sir," he continued, "I think everything's quite in order now. It only remains for you to fetch the death certificates. Remember to bring one along to me, otherwise I'm not allowed to move the body."

He showed me to the door of his shop, directed me to the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages, and smiled good-bye. It struck me as sinister that an undertaker should have false teeth. And his were white as a winding-sheet.

The Registrar lived in a little Victorian villa that faced the blank wall of a cricket ground. I could hear the click of the ball and the cheers of the spectators. The Registrar used his front room as an office, where he was sitting reading the sporting page of a newspaper. When I explained why I had come, he reached for an enormous ledger and slowly turned the pages with a moist forefinger until he found the correct entry. Then he pulled out a bundle of printed forms from a drawer beside him.

"How many do you want?" he grunted. "They're five-bob each."

"Three," I replied, and he began writing in a flamboyant hand.

Click! . . . a boundary. The crowd was cheering.

"Cause of Death, pneumonia," he went on. "H'm. Pneumonia means a lot of queer things on a death certificate. Still, I always says it's hard luck on them as do die of pneumonia."

He finished writing and blotted the three certificates ceremoniously. I paid him and left.

The funeral took place the following day. There were few mourners, but these were reinforced by six of the undertaker's men who were dressed up in shoddy black suits and moulting top-hats. It was raining heavily from a dark thundery sky, and little cascades of water fell from the brims of their hats as they walked beside the hearse. The mourners were huddled together in a large saloon car which followed close behind, though once it was held up by the traffic-lights until the hearse was practically out of sight.

The crematorium was a square grey building on the top of a hill; and the side of the hill was white with marble monuments. The hearse pulled up at the door of the chapel and the coffin was hoisted high by the undertaker's men. The shoulders of their black coats were shiny with frequent use. Inside the chapel the priest was waiting, elaborately solemn. While the mourners settled themselves in one of the pews the coffin was placed on a high dais in the centre of the chapel. The priest moved to the side of the coffin and opened his prayer-book. Instantly he began reading, quickly, monotonously, inaudibly. He must have been reading for about ten minutes, when suddenly he slowed up and raised his voice. There was a creaking sound below the dais, and the coffin wobbled out of sight. He then muttered a few more prayers and the service was over.

The undertaker was waiting in the porch. "Pardon me, sir," he said, tapping my shoulder. "Would you care to see the body committed to the flames? It gives one a sense of satisfaction, you know. This way, sir."

We descended a spiral staircase. Below the chapel was a vast echoing underworld, starkly lit by naked electric bulbs. In the distance I could see a huge black oven, with the coffin on trestles in front of it. Beside the oven stood two men dressed in tight black overalls and black skull-caps. One of them opened the door of the oven with a long iron rod, while the other pushed the coffin inside. I turned away and hurried up the staircase.

"Pardon me, sir, once again," said the undertaker, breathlessly, when he reached the top. "Do you wish to see the ashes scattered? I'm afraid you'll have to wait two hours or more . . . he was a big man. And I think I ought to tell you, sir," he added, "there's an additional charge of ten-and-sixpence."

"No thanks," I replied, "I've seen enough."

"It's a harrowing business, I know, sir. I hope you'll pardon my asking—but—your brother—were you very attached to him?"

"No," I said. "Thank God!"

He smiled. His teeth were whiter than ever.

RICHARD GRAHAM

## BONNARD AND VUILLARD

FOR thirty years now painters have been trying to take the Kingdom of Heaven by storm. They have distorted natural forms and colours so that the spectator could not tell whether the subject of a picture was a Still Life of apples, a View of the Bay of Biscay, or the Artist's Wife. They have gone further, and altogether forsworn representation, they have offered us mildly geometrical forms which were still so traditional as to suggest a third dimension, they have tried to freeze us entirely geometrical forms which were merely two-dimensional, they have wooed us with canvases which had a little colour but no distinguishable form, and they have sought to finally stun us with representations of teratological nightmares executed to resemble coloured photographs. In Paris at the Grand Palais and the Jeu de Paume retrospective exhibitions exhibit the variety of offensive methods used during this period. (The English pictures, incidentally, at the Jeu de Paume are comically unrepresentative of the best work done in England). The visitor to these exhibitions is faced with a most exhausting profusion of these machines, with which the bourgeois were

once so successfully *épatés*. But how unsuccessful in other respects a lot of this violence has proved! One consoles oneself with thinking that gentle methods would probably have been almost as futile. The value of a work of art depends chiefly upon the artist, not upon the method he happens to employ. But violence is a method particularly ill-suited to those of the third and fourth rank. The imitators of Tintoretto have been forgotten, while school-pieces in the mild style of Ruysdael or Canaletto remain as agreeable furniture. Perhaps the hosts of those who have tried vainly to bend the Odyssean bows of Cézanne or of Picasso might have been less sterile if they had given us their own reactions to natural appearances, instead of their reactions to what Cézanne and Picasso made out of natural appearances.

It was no surprise to find that apart from Picasso, Matisse and Braque, the two modern painters who made the best showing were Bonnard and Vuillard, and it is a pleasure now to find a show of their work in London at Messrs. Rosenberg and Helft's. These artists are both, I think, aged about seventy, and they have not been influenced by their impetuous juniors. Their work is the last flowering of the Impressionist tradition.

They have been christened together *Intimistes*, because the sights of the daily round of life provide their favourite subjects—girls having breakfast, a woman washing, sewing at a table, reading in a garden, arranging flowers, playing with a dog or a child. They have earned the name even more perhaps by the intimacy of their eyes with their surroundings. It is obvious that they have peered lovingly and indefatigably at the vast variety of local colour which the hasty eye of a mere acquaintance does not recognise. By exaggerating this local colour and carefully neglecting to situate objects justly in the picture-space, they have given their paintings a consistent harmony in tone which is not so much a trick as a discovery. The whole picture is woven together with no violent transitions or intervals, and the result is as sweet to the eye as Debussy is to the ear. Bonnard often uses successfully rutilant colours, purples and crimsons and oranges (as indeed Debussy may be said to have done, learning from the Russians). But Vuillard, whose quieter pictures are usually enchanting, fails when he tries to paint more brightly, as in his late works he far too frequently does. Bonnard also is an uneven artist, but his failures usually come from a sudden deadness in the texture. While Vuillard can be vulgar, Bonnard at his worst is merely dull.

Degas is the master by whom these two painters, and more noticeably Bonnard, have been most influenced. It was from him, I think, that they must have picked up their taste for looking at things from odd angles. And in a series of bathroom nudes Bonnard has used the favourite subject of Degas's old age. The inevitable comparison which one makes is, of course, unfavourable to Bonnard, almost painfully so. His drawing is not wonderful, and when he tries frank distortion, as in the legs of the tall bathing nude in this show, the result can be calamitous. But look at *Le Déjeuner*, *Le Bol de Lait*, the *Nature Morte*, or the *Femme à Table*, and you forget all comparisons in the enjoyment of sensuous loveliness. The best Vuillards in the show are *La Chambre à Coucher*, *Madame Vuillard et la Famille Roussel*, and the charming little *Ecolier*, where the artist has caught a movement as it were with a snapshot.

Bonnard and Vuillard, mutually influencing one another, I suppose, developed a method from which Mr. Sickert seems to have learnt a thing or two, with the most felicitous results. I believe that Mr. Clive Bell thinks better of Bonnard than of any painter alive, and if I disagree it is probably because I happen, perhaps vulgarly, to hold that there are qualities even more important than sensibility. I would therefore place Bonnard, and perhaps Vuillard at his best, not with Picasso and Matisse among the greatest names in the history of painting, but with Sisley and Braque and Richard Wilson, high among the secondary masters.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

# PLAYS AND PICTURES

## "Measure for Measure," at the Old Vic

*Measure for Measure* is a specially tricky play to produce. The author seems to have lost interest in it about half-way through, and turns a fine story to nonsense. (The Duke's character, if one could take it seriously, would be as curious and complicated as any in Shakespeare—a moralist who tortures people in order to study their behaviour on the rack). Moreover, the language of the play is exceedingly obscure. The producer, faced with these difficulties, has allowed his ingenuity to over-reach itself, and too often we find ourselves thinking about Mr. Tyrone Guthrie when we ought to be thinking about Angelo or Isabella. The comic scenes are among Shakespeare's best, and Mr. Jay Laurier could be a first-rate Pompey. The traditional technique of the English music-hall comedian is wonderfully apt for Shakespeare's clowns. Unluckily Mr. Laurier has been permitted or persuaded to intersperse whole interludes of fooling, which he executes brilliantly but which hold up the play. "That's villainous, and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it." Moreover, for Elbow to hit the Justice over the head with a truncheon passes the bounds of decency. Altogether the comic scenes are dragged out to an intolerable length. Mr. Emlyn Williams endowed Angelo with an admirable voice and a most unlucky appearance. Sometimes he looked like Shaw's Joan of Arc, sometimes like Stephen Phillipps' Nero. The costume of a nun is known to be particularly stimulating to some perverse sensualists, but Angelo is not such a man, and must not look like one. His appearance has to be grimly ascetic, as his life has been. In his quieter moments Mr. Williams can be very impressive, but he gasps and chokes and clutches his heart and rustles his silk sleeves in a fashion which would be tiresome in any role, and which is peculiarly unsuitable to such an intellectual as Angelo. He is an uncommonly self-controlled man who suffers a surprise from his senses. And when detected, he surely should retain his dignity, instead of spanielling the Duke with Levantine hysteria. The Old Vic is transpontine, but *Measure for Measure* is more than a

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melodrama. Miss Marie Ney acted with intelligence and restraint the unsympathetic part of Isabella. The Duke was not always audible, Claudio made little of a great part, and Lucio resembled a motor salesman rather than a fantastic. Mr. Guthrie, of course, managed his crowds and positions very skilfully, but the production gave little pleasure to the eye, and must be written off as one of the Old Vic's least successful undertakings.

### "Youth the Season" at the Westminster

If you are prepared to let down your back hair or throw your sporran over the windmill, you may get a certain amount of crude enjoyment out of this caricature of Dublin Chelsea. But all Fascists beware! The young man, who occupies the stage for most of the play is a double-dyed pansy and makes his confession early in the play. The whole of the second act is occupied with a party he gives in his studio and he is left at the close of the scene in close proximity with his affinity. After that the play, hitherto a farce, lapses into fifth-rate melodrama of Tchekovian extraction, and Mr. Niall McGuinnis as a disillusioned poet shoots himself after dreeing his weird at some length or whatever the Irish expression is for that process. If properly produced with a considerable curtailment of the extravagance of some of the acting, there is the makings of a moderately amusing play in the first two acts, but it is difficult to decide if the manifest crudities are due to the author's real age or to her observation of a particularly ingenuous group of young people. Lord Longford's actors have plenty of talent and admirable performances are given by Mr. Black Gifford, Miss Ninka Dolega and Miss Doris Finn. But it would be only charitable to suppose that it is lack of material that brings this play into the orbit of production.

### "The World in Revolt," at the Rialto.

This is an anthology of old news-reels showing riots, civil wars or revolutions in Russia, Austria, Italy, Germany, Cuba, China, France, the United States and Spain. The spectacle of imbecility, cruelty and destruction erupting upon one part after another of the earth's frame is appalling enough in itself, but what is worse is that it leaves one convinced that these horrors are nothing compared with what the human race is about to endure. As a document in social pathology the film deserves to survive, and to bewilder our posterity—if any—with a picture of their diseased ancestors. Unluckily the commentary is quite puerile, and most of it is howled hysterically by two American gentlemen—specialists, one presumes, in broadcasting running descriptions of boxing-matches. It was characteristic of them to say in the same breath that Dolfuss was universally beloved and that he was assassinated by his opponents. The film ends with views of England triumphing over the General Strike and the slump, especial credit being given to protective tariffs. This section of the film, designed to show this country as the one prosperous and safe place in the world, enjoys the privilege of an English commentator, some of whose remarks deserve a place in our "This England" column. It looks like straight propaganda from the Unionist Central Office, and ends with British battleships moving to the music of *Rule Britannia*. The film includes shots of Nicholas II, Lenin, Trotsky, and the current dictators. If the commentary had been supplied by an intelligent person—Commander King-Hall, for instance—the film would have been incomparably more interesting.

### "The Pearls of the Crown," at the Curzon

This is a parade of historical personages, shepherded, played, teased, and presented by M. Sacha Guitry. The story is frankly a stock model, the history of a necklet of pearls, once owned by Catherine de Medici, from Henry VIII to Edward VIII. But the fresh and irresponsible treatment is the thing. M. Guitry never allows any attitude to settle in for long and most of the time it is hard to know whether one should be sad or cynical about the dreadful things which happen so cheerfully before one's eyes. The tones change every minute and merge into one another, so that the comment facetious becomes the moment tragic, and the callous quip the course of true love. Broad allusions, disrespectful sniggers and banal pathos crowd together, while M. Guitry jests wittily as François I, Barras or Napoleon III. Cardinal Wolsey's reproaches to Henry VIII parody Archbishop Lang's utterances of last Christmas, Napoleon Buonaparte makes serious love to Josephine, Pope Clement plots like a Medici—the whole thing goes on in alternating English, French and Italian, and on one occasion some noises are made which purport not very seriously to be Ethiopian. It is a very charming and original film.

### "Exclusive," at the Plaza

It is reassuring for the conservative filmgoer to find that no amount of New Deal Racketeering Clean Up or Reform of the Supreme Court can seriously affect the film conception of American drama. Hollywood can still present the war between right and wrong, the noble newspaper that campaigns against rottenness in the State. *Exclusive* is in the great tradition, starting in bruises, ending in blood, packed with heart-throbs and the native brand of humour. Mr. Fred MacMurray is so much the high-minded young City editor that one forgets he is an actor. Miss Frances Farmer looks very pretty and wears a lot of nice clothes (ill gotten gains). Mr. Charles Ruggles taking his first reasonably straight part for years, shows that in seeing him only as a farceur we have been missing a good deal of his talent. The villain is Mr. Lloyd Nolan whose persuasive voice and beautiful linen do not preserve him from the fate he works so smoothly and efficiently to deserve. The fate itself is one which in daydreams sometimes overtakes Fascist leaders—the reign of a gang terminated by a mob, the rule of the knuckle-duster collapsing in equivalent brutality. The unexpected arrival on the scene of mounted police, who content themselves with bashing the crowd and leaving the murderer alone, adds a touch of contemporary observation to the mixture. Morally speaking this film is satisfactory, and it really is very good entertainment.

### The Storran Gallery

The Storran Gallery has moved from Brompton Road to Albany Courtyard in Piccadilly, a few steps towards Burlington House from Sackville Street. The new gallery occupies the three floors of a small house. The lighting is admirable, particularly in the top room where it is certainly the most ingeniously arranged and probably the best in London. At the moment the basement contains a collection of contemporary English work, the ground floor has paintings by Picasso, Roualt, Renoir and others of the great, while on the first floor is the first one-man show of Miss Nicolette MacNamara. Miss MacNamara's pictures are delightful, frisky and fillylike—and they look as though they knew it. Her subjects are of the kind which has been out of fashion since painting has grown so solemn. She paints from a detached and almost whimsical point of view which sees the whole world as a motive and chooses to use the less frequented parts—birds' nests and wild fowl, an Irish colonel alone with dogs in his barrack dining-room, people riding in parks and woodlands, or people in bed. And it is all carried out with great dash and skill and a real gift for tone.

## THE COMING WEEK

SATURDAY, October 16th—
- British Youth Peace Assembly: Students' Conference on "China To-day," Kingsway Hall, 10.30.
- W. E. A. Saturday School, Morley College, 3.
- "The Queen's Pleasure," Maddermarket Theatre, Norwich.

SUNDAY, October 17th—
- W. B. Curry on "Co-education," Conway Hall, 11.
- Conference on Civil Liberty in India. Speakers: Prof. H. J. Laski, Lester Hutchinson, Dr. Mulk Raj Anand and others, Transport House, 11 a.m.–9.30 p.m. (4 sessions).
- Dora Russell on "The Intellectual in Modern Politics," 153 Finchley Road, 6.15.

MONDAY, October 18th—
- "Anything But the Truth," Westminster.

TUESDAY, October 19th—
- Rev. H. P. Junod on "Black Crime and White Punishment," Friends House, 1.20.
- P. A. Sloan on "The U.S.S.R.," Morley College, 8.
- Dudley Collard on "The Law of Public Meetings," Small Kingsway Hall, 8.15.
- "The Laughing Cavalier," Adelphi.

WEDNESDAY, October 20th—
- Barbara Wootton on "The Dangers of Democratic Defeatism," Conway Hall, 8.
- B.B.C. Symphony Concert, Queen's Hall.
- "It's in the Bag," Savoy.

THURSDAY, October 21st—
- Fabian Society Lecture: Bertrand Russell on "Science and Social Institutions," Friends Hall, 8.30.

FRIDAY, October 22nd—
- I.P.C. First National Congress. Open Public Meeting, Central Hall, 8. Speakers include The Viscount Samuel, Eleanor Rathbone, Vyvyan Adams, The Lord Mayor of Manchester. Congress continues until 24th at University College.

# Current Literature

## BOOKS IN GENERAL

I HAVE just read again, with great enjoyment, Hugh Kingsmill's biography of Frank Harris, the ex-cowboy who splashed into London society in the eighties and divided his great natural talents between the not unconnected arts of politics, blackmail, journalism, and literature, in each of which he would have succeeded better had he possessed that minimum of honesty required in all things. In spite of a positive genius for behaving caddishly, he attracted many disciples. Mr. Kingsmill was one of these, and it is amusing to be told that Mr. Middleton Murry, during his Harris period, greeted the appearance of *The Man Shakespeare* as a biography by one who was Shakespeare's intellectual superior. I was particularly interested in Mr. Kingsmill's account of the fuss made about Harris's *Thoughts on Morals*, published in the *English Review* in 1911, in which he maintained that society should condone greater sexual freedom in women, so that they might lead fuller and happier lives. Mr. St. Loe Strachey denounced such "blear-eyed grossness" in the *Spectator* and Harris's poor little truism stirred up as much rumpus as if he had published reminiscences of the brothel which, he boasted to Kingsmill, he had once run in Mayfair. Kingsmill compares Harris in society to a colour-blind chameleon vainly trying to match its green environment by turning pink or purple, but his inspired tactlessness seems to have been due to a desire for revenge like that of the hero in Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground*. The results were sometimes extremely painful, at others very funny, as in his meeting with Browning, whom he impressed favourably.

> But when Harris pressed him to confide whether he had learned the whole gamut of passion from Mrs. Browning, or whether he had amassed his sex-lore from a number of sources, Browning drew into himself like a hurt snail and looked indignant.

It is very funny to turn with Harris's question in one's mind to *Robert Browning and Julia Wedgwood, A Broken Friendship as Revealed in Their Letters*, edited by Richard Curle (Cape, 10*s.* 6*d.*). For this correspondence, which has only come to light since the death of Miss Wedgwood's younger sister, supplies part of the answer, and as Mr. Curle rightly says, helps us to understand Browning as a poet and a man.

* * *

Julia Wedgwood was a great-granddaughter of Josiah and a woman of vigorous intellect whose mind was usually, in Mr. Curle's words, "fixed on higher things." At the age of twenty-five she had published two anonymous novels (not in the London Library, alas!); and at thirty she met Browning, who was acquainted with her brother, whose death, shortly afterwards, drew them together almost as much as her admiration of Browning's poetry. In her grief Browning, who had lost Mrs. Browning two years before, was a great help to her. For a few letters they discuss the hope of eternal life, but she is almost immediately preoccupied with the terms of their friendship—laying down what it is and what it is not; since she was unaware that in real intimacies such important matters have to take their own course. Browning certainly felt warm sympathy for her and liked her a good deal, and the friendship might have ripened into another emotion if——. But there are a great many *ifs* in the case. If there had not been (though she is unlikely to have known of its existence for another quarter-century)—that inlaid wooden box in which the correspondence of E. B. B. and R. B. exactly fitted. What power had a rather deaf young blue stocking to set against those wonderful love-letters? For six months or so the correspondence does not flag and reveals a growing attachment. Miss Wedgwood—so it seems to me—showed her unconscious jealousy of Browning's past life in ways which I think he must have found irritating though he would not have seen in them the significance that anyone would to-day. She is continually and unnecessarily referring to his bereavement and life-long sorrow; she continually twits him with his immense age, at which I cannot think he was much amused; and she continually allows her mind to play with the fancy of the death of his son—a fine healthy boy of fifteen. This last seems an interesting case of unconscious desire.

> Ah, dear friend, how I hope you may not survive your son; is he strong and healthy? And yet I daresay it would not be so terrible to you, remembering whom he would join—otherwise the grief of a parent is almost too hard! . . . A superstitious pang went through my heart as I opened a chance book upon Burke's lamentation over the death of his only son! I have a superstition that I can prevent evils by speaking of them and fearing them. Alas, it has sometimes failed me.

If the boy *had* died, she, reversing their roles, would play the part of Browning's consoler; he would lean on her entirely and the living witness of his great love would no longer be an obstacle between them. These, I am convinced, are thoughts which never rose to the surface of her mind.

* * *

The interest of the letters, as Mr. Curle points out, is not only in the personal story. The lady is gradually led away from the subject of what she may offer and he may accept to a discussion of Tennyson, Browning and Landor and gossip of Mrs. Cameron. Often she says a lively thing or a true one. Thus of Homer: "I wonder what the charm is of unfeelingness whenever it is not unnatural. One feels it in a young animal and in these old stories." But Browning is naturally more interesting than the future authoress of *The Moral Ideal*. It is fun to hear that he would not have ended *Enoch Arden* with a costly funeral—he would make Enoch stick to his resolution and the happy family, sallying out nutting one autumnal day, should pass a rough coffin on a cart—a pauper's funeral, and speculate idly on what poor devil is going to his account. He writes:

> Landor has written passages not exceeded in beauty and subtlety by any literature I am acquainted with; that is my opinion; other people have theirs.

He tells a good Landor story and shows a violence towards reviewers that recalls his terrific abuse of Fitzgerald. In the later part of the correspondence he gives a fine defence of the conception and treatment of *The Ring and The Book* in several letters. But first came the break. Miss Wedgwood, as appears from a letter from a woman friend quoted by Mr. Curle, became aware that she was in love and preferred no bread to half a loaf. She therefore wrote:

> It would be better that we did not meet again . . . my pleasure in your company has had an interpretation put upon it that I ought not to allow. I have no doubt the fault has been mine, in incautiously allowing it to be known that I made an object of your visits.

Later on she stupidly said: "It was impossible for me to carry on the outward indulgence of a friendship after it had been implied to me: He feels it a *gêne*." Browning showed her the most perfect consideration, but by this time the modern reader is likely to feel a sense of suffocation as though he had been confined in the shuttered rooms of a zenana. Cross the Channel and read what Flaubert was writing almost at the same moment of the middle sixties to George Sand, who had been to stay with him. They had worked in their respective rooms all day and sat up till three in the morning talking, and he wrote blowing her up for her indifference to beauty and ending: "Je vous embrasse très tendrement sur les deux côtés de votre joli col." What a relief this seems after the twilight region—half purdah, half below-stairs—of Miss Wedgwood's propriety. For there is a curious under-breeding about raising continual questions of: "What will people say if you come to tea on Sunday?" to shower on a great poet of unimpeachable respectability. It was not the fault of Miss Wedgwood, but that of her age. The housemaids were forbidden "followers" and the young ladies were allowed "followers" but forbidden friends. Thank goodness all that is dead, and I think the blackguards and cads like Harris helped to kill it.

DAVID GARNETT

# NEW NOVELS

**To Have and Have Not.** By ERNEST HEMINGWAY. *Cape.* 7*s.* 6*d.*
**Europa in Limbo.** By ROBERT BRIFFAULT. *Robert Hale.* 8*s.* 6*d.*
**Wide Boys Never Work.** By ROBERT WESTERBY. *Arthur Barker.* 7*s.* 6*d.*
**The Man Who Started Clean.** By T. O. BEACHCROFT. *Boriswood.* 7*s.* 6*d.*
**The First Lover.** By KAY BOYLE. *Faber and Faber.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Let us start with Hemingway. *To Have and Have Not*, while a much better book than *Green Hills of Africa*, and very exciting and readable, represents no sort of advance on his other short stories, nor is there any sign of him having profited from Lewis' "Dumb Ox" article. His new hero is the dumbest ox of all. In this book Hemingway is the victim of his style. He does not parody himself, but he is unable to tackle anything that does not fit into it. His style was originally formed by two influences I should guess, *Huckleberry Finn* and Gertrude Stein-Sherwood Anderson. It was a reaction to the verbose highbrow style of the literary mandarins, Henry James, Conrad, the American men of letters, and aimed at complete simplicity and co-ordination between the written word and the violent emotions behind it. Long sentences, allusions, analogies, ideas, all that is thoughtful or educated is alien to it. It is an admirable medium, a technique like Seurat's, for rendering the life of the body, its inarticulate pleasures and pains, heroism and lust, but is not capable of any enlargement. The novelist must always remain on the same level as his characters and must not stand aside from them. Like the king he must never say anything that might not have been said by the dullest of his subjects. Hence the "Dumb Ox" charge of Lewis, who does not see what admirable results are gained by the method, how essential the author's dumbness is to it. The great factor in determining Hemingway's style has been his body. His body is the opposite of Proust's, his style is the opposite of Proust's. Hemingway is a very large athletic man possessed of enormous physical vitality. Boxing, bull-fighting, big-game shooting, tarpon-fishing, soldiering are as necessary to him as a walk in the park to you or me or cork walls and complete silence were to Proust. But this huge frame that knows no illness, except when it stops a bullet, has a healthy contempt for all constipated and meditative colleagues, and has passed on its schoolboy prejudices to the extremely alert and intelligent artist who inhabits it.

> I know about love. Love always hangs up behind the bath-room door. It smells like lysol. To hell with love. Love is you making me happy and then going off to sleep with your mouth open while I lie awake all night afraid to say my prayers even because I know I have no right to any more. Love is all the dirty little tricks you taught me that you probably got out of some books. All right. I'm through with you and I'm through with love. Your kind of picknose love. You writer. . . . If you were just a good writer I could stand for all the rest of it maybe. But I've seen you bitter, jealous, changing your politics to suit the fashion, sucking up to people's faces and talking about them behind their backs.

So speaks the Irish wife of a villain in *To Have and Have Not*, as she casts her vile literary husband out of house and home, and so speaks the whole physique of Hemingway, longing to get at another Max Eastman, and so speak most Germans, Italians, business men, he-men and schoolboys. Grrrr! *You writer!*

*To Have and Have Not* consists of three long short stories which form three sections in the life of Harry Morgan, a Key West character who makes a living by rum-running, gun-running and man-running between Florida and Cuba. This active passionate life on the verge of the tropics is perfect material for the Hemingway style, and the reader carries away from the book a sense of freshness and exhilaration; trade winds, southern cities, and warm seas all admirably described by the instrument of precision with which he writes. Against the background move Harry Morgan, the chivalrous buccaneer, the "Rummies," Revolutionaries, and decayed longshoremen, and the even more decayed winter visitors who bring the vices of the rich. What French papers call "*Le Tragique Bilan*" is exceptionally high, even for a Hemingway. Jaws crack like "a bag of marbles," necks are broken ("Don't think you can't hear it crack either") and a great many people are shot. Morally I find the book odious. When a winter visitor doesn't pay Morgan for fishing lessons he makes up for it by breaking the man's neck. Because Richard Gordon is a writer everyone is justified in taking a poke at him. Morgan has "cojones" (polite translation, guts) and is therefore a hero. Gordon is a villain, he has not. At the end of the book Hemingway abandons his sentimental underdog attitude, and substitutes Left-wing propaganda by analysing, in the O'Hara manner, the people on the yachts. This lands him in difficulties with his style again, and in some confusion over the dual scale of values, potency versus impotency, and capitalism versus communism. Alas, in real life the Right are often more potent than the Left.

It is the fashion to say that Hemingway is finished. His book on big-game hunting, his flashy he-man articles in *Esquire* and his attitude to criticism have alienated a great many people. But I do not think he is. These three stories are not very new, but they show an admirable handling of his material, within its limitations. But Hemingway has been in Spain for some time now and he is obviously the person who can write the great book about the Spanish war. And in Spain he will not be able to write about people who feel without writing about people who think, since the Government troops are not dumb oxen, like the Moors, and consequently he can get rid of his anti-highbrow complexes. He will have to write about people like himself. "Cojones" are not enough.

Meanwhile, in spite of all the warbooks, sport books, talkies, and crime-books, and the articles in the *Daily Express* which imitate him, he is still a delight to read. "You know how it is there early in the morning in Havana" his book begins, and if you get that far you had better put off all engagements till it is finished.

*Europa in Limbo* is a sequel to *Europa*, a long, sensational, meretricious and dramatic picture of the rottenness of pre-war Europe. The sequel is the worst possible kind of propaganda, that which continually gives away a good case by overstatement. Briffault is a passionate Communist and he has described the war, which he knows a good deal about, from a Communist standpoint. But this consists chiefly in vilifying everyone who had anything to do with it and in giving a free rein to his rabid detestation of England, and especially English Liberals. Now English Imperialism is certainly the enemy of Communism, but English democracy is surely preferable to German Imperialism. In England the two things existed, in Germany only the one. But we are shown a kind of long animated newsreel; the permanent under-secretary at the Foreign Office is in the pay of international finance—he helps the Germans to invade Roumania in case the oil wells are damaged in their defence, he marries a Belgian refugee and spy, who knows enough to put him in prison; the colonels are only interested in dogs and horses; the officers get V.C.s while drunk and stay away from the Front afterwards; the general staff is hopelessly inefficient; the politicians are all corrupt; Lloyd George explains that "without profiteering the war could not last another day." It is brought hurriedly to a close to enable Germany to get strong again and fight Communism. All Englishwomen are whores, except one or two mad ones, who are Liberals, and through all the stupidity, hypocrisy, greed, and carnage stalks Julian Berne, the one just man, a Communist whose whole life is spent among the upper classes, married to the daughter of a Grand Duke, and present at every orgy, in brothels, opium dens, the Savoy Hotel, calmly noting the depravity of the governing class—and going on to the next party. He is omniscient too. When the League of Nations is mooted in 1917 he remarks "To uphold the rights of small nations? The rights of Japan against China, for instance. Of Italy against Abyssinia, or against Spain, let us say!"

A far-sighted fellow. And the Head of the F.O. in 1917 knew Lawrence's name was Shaw. Diabolical.

Meanwhile, Julian Berne is able to live through it all and give us a fine description of a Dada party in Paris and a Perambulator Party of the Bright Young People before leaving for New York, in time, we hope, to get ready another volume about the iniquities of the Jazz Age. Granted that wars are a result of capitalism and imperialism, that English diplomacy pursues unerringly the policy of the Double Face and the Deaf Ear, that the whole country even is a piece of stale blancmange in the seething cauldron of Europe. But a novel on such a theme must have some artistic value, must try to see both sides, if it is to succeed as propaganda; beside Malraux or Alexis Tolstoy, *Europa in Limbo* is just a bad cartoon, which is a pity, as it contains many interesting glimpses of Europe in wartime, apart from the doings of the upper class, with their eternal round of rapes and séances, and the bargaining of the statesmen, selling their countries to each other and buying them back again at a profit.

*Wide Boys Never Work* is the story of the new type of English tough guy. The boy who works in with the Race Gangs, the

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Tic Tac boys, the Dog Stadiums, and the Second-hand Car swindlers. The author describes the boy's life in the Hemingway manner and then appears as himself for a few pages to lecture and explain to the reader. This is an interesting novel, readable and well-written. He gets the Englishness of the whole scene admirably and yet shows how it is beginning to acclimatise the American gang system. Only the pansy party is somewhat unconvincing, the rest is highly realistic. The American racket is a way of making money out of crime which is exceptionally hard to put down. Dewey's efforts in New York were superhuman. It is as dangerous as the Colorado Beetle. I found *Wide Boys Never Work* extremely fair and convincing; anyone who doesn't believe in its seriousness should observe carefully a trial which is coming off next month. For the English rackets have their bosses as elusive and important as "Lucky Luciano." If you like this vivid account of London's underworld you should try as a companion volume Scott Moncrieff's *Café Bar*.

*The Man who Started Clean* is a book about a young businessman who loses his memory and has to learn everything again from babyhood. His two selves finally accommodate themselves. This is a very nice neat piece of novel-writing with an excellent central idea. Perhaps the conclusion is rather tame, and the memoir that the baby-self writes would have been improved by being put in a totally different style from the rest. Both *The Man who Started Clean* and *Wide Boys Never Work* are propaganda novels, but the propaganda consists in the genuine and freely expressed hopes of the authors to see the abuses they discuss rectified in a better society. It in no way interferes with the verisimilitude of their story. These are both fresh and interesting books and give one a certain amount of hope for the English novel, especially Beachcroft's. Don't miss it.

*The First Lover* is a book of short stories by Kay Boyle, mostly reprinted from fashionable magazines. Miss Boyle has the American love of fine writing and some talent. There are stories in which they coincide, as in a sketch of Lawrence, and more where they don't, where one reads a lot of fey nothings with an echo of J. M. Synge or Katherine Mansfield. Gossamer is not enough either.

CYRIL CONNOLLY


## Mass-Observers

might increase their own usefulness and the interest of their work by acquiring some knowledge of the scope and progress to date of academic anthropology. Dr. R. R. Marett's *Man in the Making* is perhaps the cheapest sound introduction to the subject on the market. There are chapters on Evolution, Magic, Religion, Marriage, Government, Law, Property, Morality, etc., together with a short bibliography.

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## BOOKS ON RUSSIA

**Political and Diplomatic History of Russia.** By GEORGE VERNADSKY. *Williams and Norgate.* 16*s.*

**The Russian Peasant Movement, 1906-17.** By LAUNCELOT A. OWEN. *King.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Thanks to Russia and to the Soviet Revolution thousands of people have rushed into print who would never otherwise have dreamed of becoming "authors." Without even a smattering of the subject, without one word of the language, new authors have thought themselves qualified to express their views and even theories on a country of 170 million people and on an historical process of infinite complexity. Is it because Russia and Russian history are so little known to the average Englishman and American that almost anything "will do" with both publishers and readers? Certainly much fewer people have ventured to rush so completely unequipped about, say, France or Germany—countries in the case of which the danger of being denounced as an ignoramus is incomparably greater. It is therefore particularly pleasant to come across a couple of books on Russia written by men who know their subject, and have given it thought and research. Mr. George Vernadsky's *Political and Diplomatic History of Russia* is one of them. It is one of the best short histories of Russia written in English, and is bound to be of considerable value not only as a reference book for students, but also to the general reader who is not content to accept the proverbial Intourist guide's remark that the Black Sea was "only a pond before the Revolution," or to dismiss all that went before 1917 as "the dark ages of Tsarism." Mr. Vernadsky's theme is the development of the Russian State as such, from the early Middle Ages downwards; and he treats it rather as a single process, a process by which successive systems of Government, often differing in their methods, and completely unlike each other on the face of it, nevertheless always tended to strengthen, both politically and geographically, the unity of the Russian State. The abolition of independent Ukraines and Georgias under the Soviets was as much part of the eternally Russian policy of geographical and political consolidation as was Moscow's and Petersburg's conquest of the Ukraine in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Mr. Vernadsky, who seems to be, at times, excessively influenced by the "Eurasian" doctrine of Russian history, feels very strongly on the subject. Time and again he detects in the distant Russian past certain phenomena which do not re-emerge until after the Soviet Revolution; for instance, when he says:

> The clergy had its obvious reasons for being dissatisfied with Peter the Great. Everybody of the old stock was shocked by Peter's sacrilegious sallies, such as the creation of a sham church council . . . which held its "sessions" during Peter's carousals in his new capital. It was the forerunner of the activities of the Godless in Communistic Russia.

Or, as he says in his preface:

> The present-day Soviet Russia seems to be an entirely different country from pre-war Imperial Russia, both governmentally and culturally; yet, in a sense, the change between the old Muscovite Russia of the seventeenth century and the Europeanised Empire of Peter the Great was as sudden as the present one.

Or, speaking of Ivan the Terrible's *opritchina*, he says:

> This was a veritable "revolution from above," aiming at the destruction of the Boyar aristocracy; it can only be compared with Stalin's campaign against the Kulaks in 1929–30. Each of these two "revolutions from above" was directed against a whole class within the nation.

Some of his parallels are more convincing than others; but his main thesis that a centralised, military, and mainly autocratic form of Government in Russia was essential for the maintenance of the Russian State, constantly threatened with invasion, and therefore in search of natural boundaries (which were not reached until the nineteenth century), and at the same time requiring to control immense, but sparsely populated areas, seems to be a view which would have been endorsed in Russia both under the Tsarist régime and to-day. At the same time Mr. Vernadsky emphasises the existence of profoundly democratic institutions which, like the *mir*, or village community, coexisted with Muscovite autocracy at its worst, or the medieval elders' commune, "of which the present-day village Soviet seems to be the direct heir." It is curious to think that a book like Mr. Vernadsky's would probably have the approval to-day of the educational authorities in Russia, which, having turned away from Poprovsky's Marxist interpretations, teach Russian schoolboys a type of history in which the

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"continuity" of Russian history is strongly emphasised, and in which Alexander Nevsky, who defeated the Teutonic knights in the thirteenth century, and so stopped "pan-Germanic" expansion, is treated as a national hero, and Peter the Great (also immensely popularised in recent historical fiction) as one of the great "forerunners." But except for his preface, and a few passages here and there, Mr. Vernadsky does not ram these ideas down his reader's throat. His book is a straightforward account of the essential diplomatic, military and political developments in Russia in the last thousand years. His main subject is actually foreign policy—a subject on which he is most illuminating. The cultural side of Russian history is neglected, as is also, to a large extent, the social background. The great ferment of ideas, so characteristic of Russian society from the beginning of the nineteenth century, and the rôle of the intellegentsia during that century—a rôle which was in reality that of a powerful Opposition and of a potent corrective to the Tsarist régime—are passed over very slightly in Mr. Vernadsky's history. Nor does he deal much with economic backgrounds, which are, as it were, taken for granted.

The reader who will find Mr. Vernadsky's book an incomplete guide will be able to fill in a particularly important gap by reading Mr. Launcelot Owen's *Russian Peasant Movement*, covering the period between the 1905 and 1917 revolutions. With meticulous care Mr. Owen examines the principal phases of this little-known struggle—the peasant revolts of 1905–06, Stolypin's belated and abortive attempt to create a peasant "middle class," which would become a new backbone of the tottering Tsarist régime, and the vast agrarian revolution of 1917 which (as Sir Bernard Pares says in his preface) "contributed that basis on which the Communist revolution in October rested, both for its achievement and for its permanence, which, of course, included the success of the Reds in the civil war." Except for a rather undistinguished style (it was originally written as a Ph.D thesis), it is a first-rate contribution to the history of the Russian Revolution available in English.

ALEXANDER WERTH

## BOCCACCIO

**The Tranquil Heart: Portrait of Giovanni Boccaccio.** By CATHERINE CARSWELL. *Lawrence and Wishart.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

I invite all who read Mrs. Carswell on Robert Burns to guess why she has chosen Boccaccio this time. Is it because he slept with Fiammetta?

In so doing, we gather, he showed surprising originality, and an almost angelic sweetness of disposition. He lived many years before D. H. Lawrence, and Dante and Petrarch had set him the bad example of being platonic, yet he was not led astray; consequently, the practice of sexual love did not wholly perish of their "incalculable" and blighting influence, but has been enabled to survive till the present time.

I don't think that puts the situation too strongly. "Literary historians never fail to point to Boccaccio's inferiority as a poet to Dante and as an artist to Petrarch. But it is to him that we owe most"—as to the voice of one crying in the wilderness. However, Mrs. Carswell has not a great deal more to say about this Italian Forerunner—certainly not enough for a book; and she has been glad to diverge on Petrarch and Laura to fill up space. Laura gets off with an indulgent "Not Proven," since who knows what she felt? "Beautiful she must have been, and gracious. Petrarch's devotion surely gratified, but did it also bore her? About this, as in fact, about everything else, her dust is silent." Quite so.

But the Laureate is not merely a stop-gap; he serves throughout as the butt and awful example, the "foil" to Boccaccio's "honest warmth." This cock-fighting style of criticism is always unsympathetic, and too often contagious—one begins to side with the victim; as applied here, it has a quite peculiar ungraciousness. Why convert one of the most touching of literary friendships into a battlefield? "For many days," wrote Boccaccio after Petrarch's death, "I wept without ceasing—not at his going to heaven, but for myself thus unhappy and abandoned. And it is not wonderful, for no one in the world loved him more than I." Mrs. Carswell's line is that this attachment only proves her hero's sweet nature—Petrarch was a beautiful delusion of his. Every proof of esteem, kindness and solicitude on the other side is recorded with, as it were, a footnote of denigration: sometimes she does her best to be fair, but the relapse always comes immediately.

It is very provoking—all the more because her idol was really and truly such a nice man that one can't wish to turn and rend him (as might be done, by employing her own tactics), even for the Laureate's sake: and because the comic side of her victim is undeniable. Indeed it is one of his attractions to be always making one smile. However, he remains a fascinating study and a great charmer, write as you like of him, and the Petrarch chapters, with all their animus, are much the best of the book.

We know comparatively little about Boccaccio, and extremely little, after all, about the Fiammetta affair. Obviously his own treatment of it contains a good deal of humbug—or say convention, as we are not talking about the Laureate. None the less, Mrs. Carswell describes it without misgiving, and with the gushing sentimentality of the propagandist. It ended ill for Boccaccio, and in general his life was not very fortunate; the outsider may well ask why he should be credited with a tranquil heart. But Mrs. Carswell knows *a priori* that he must have had one—because he slept with Fiammetta. "Tranquillity is for the heart that has been able in proud simplicity to commit itself to a single ardour. This Petrarch never attained."

Boccaccio's literary merit has the same origin. "Dante alone could sometimes rival" the "warmth and blitheness" of the *Decameron* stories. "But with Dante the radiance occurs only at the apex of a solitary and heavenly flight, whereas Boccaccio sheds it upon companies of men and women seated at dinner tables, and makes it stream from the hearts of lovers who solace each other in a human bed." As for Petrarch, he is only an "artist," or an "exquisite artist."

Is it really impossible to like three great writers at the same time?

The book is well padded with fourteenth-century politics. Mrs. Carswell has not spared her labour, but she might have spared ours with advantage; much less background would have been quite enough for the subject, and to the common reader her erudition will be only a string of names. "King Robert's brother, big-nosed Philip of Taranto, who was known as 'the Unlucky,' was taking as his second wife the twelve-year-old Catherine de Courteney. At the same time, Philip's son, by his earlier, divorced wife, Ithamar Commena, was espousing Catherine's half-sister, Giovanna. And both girls were daughters of Charles of Valois. . . ." "Robert replaced an objectionable governor, Lando da Gubbio, by a Tuscan noble, and sent a Catalonian general, Raimondo da Cordona, to help the Commune against Ugoccione. Troubles, however, were not at an end for Florence. . . . The Pope sent his legate, Bertrand de Poiet—who was also his reputed son—ostensibly to oppose 'the Great Serpent,' Matteo Visconti. . . ." This kind of thing, extended for pages, is heavy going, and it leads nowhere at all.

K. JOHN

## ESCAPING TO SPAIN

**Farewell Spain.** By KATE O'BRIEN. *Heinemann.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

**Spanish Circus.** By MARTIN ARMSTRONG. *Collins.* 15*s.*

**The Life and Death of a Spanish Town.** By ELLIOT PAUL. *Peter Davies.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

The lexicographer of the *idées reçues* of our time will have some fun when he comes to the word "escapism." Under the sub-heading: A Bad Thing, he will note that our only admired kind of holiday was the busman's; turning to Spain, he will observe that you were called an escapist if you went to Spain before August, 1936, but not an escapist if you joined the International Brigade or became some kind of British delegate afterwards. An odd distinction. Yet the impression the sensitive brought back from Spain was not usually a glamorous or romantic one. Those warnings about Carmen and the picturesque, or even "the black legend" had had little relevance; here and there you might find some fussy and spinsterly English undergraduate shrilling about his latest discovery of the "muy típica." Your own impression was of something almost terrifyingly "actual"—I thank Miss Kate O'Brien for bringing back that word. No one who thought or felt for himself could come back from Spain (before 1936) without scars, without a twist of the countenance, without the startled rigidity of one who has had vital issues thrust suddenly under his nose. You found there reality, spiritual and carnal, not smoothed to the texture of Western culture. Escapism, I suspect, took place when you returned to Birmingham or Hampstead, where you could shelter in the mild English climate and forget that in Spain you had been stripped naked.

Miss O'Brien in her wistful book of notes on her holidays in a country that will not be the same again, poses in sackcloth and sits in the waste land shoring fragments against her ruins. Her long essay on the future regimentation of the world and the disappear-

ance of private pleasure seems to me sentimental and false, a self-indulgent defeatism. The Spaniards have startled the world by their capacity for enduring suffering, their positive appetite for it. Did the wars of the last century ruin the Spanish character? On the contrary, they seem to have expressed it. There is the story she retells of Santa Teresa crossing the flooded bridge with her nuns. Safe on the other side the saint did not thank God, but asked Him why He treated the righteous so; and when He replied that such treatment was the privilege of His friends, she dryly remarked, "Therefore you have so few." There is the essence of the Spanish nature. There are no "farewells" to it. The man standing alone, grave, isolated, negative—the first Spaniard you see as you cross the frontier—will be there again. Miss O'Brien observed him; she observed many small but indicative things in her travels. She is very readable, but all that melancholy "Good-bye" writing is sheer "Come Back to Erin" in highbrow disguise.

Mr. Paul has his sentimental moments, too, about a small town in Ibiza, but they belong to a more genuine sentiment to which Americans, as the world's small town men, are peculiarly entitled. His book is, moreover, original and interesting in method. He lived with his family in the place for some years and he has drawn its portrait. The shopkeepers, the fishermen, the landowners, the police, the priest, the Fascists, the Communists, the idle and the industrious—in their several categories each outstanding person sits for his picture and a very human, tolerant and comprehensive portrait it is. Ibiza looked like a minor Eden which was troubled by the serpent, but was more or less used to him. More composed, less tribally aggressive than small regions on the mainland, the island, nevertheless, had social problems which were not essentially different from those to be found in the wilderness of Estramadura:

> Cosmi was the natural leader of liberal thinkers and courageous men, and he and Ferrer were good friends. I do not mean that there were revolutionary plots, or involved Marxian discussions at Cosmi's in the late reaches of each night. Merely that Ferrer, if he felt like it, could say aloud that it was a damn shame Matute's second cousin (sole contractor for building roads) had left the gravel piled on the muddy sidewalks for two years. And Cosmi could call attention to the fact that the Guardia Civil permitted the young monarchists to hold meetings whenever they liked, but that all republican organisations were refused permission on the ground of public safety. (*N.B.—there was a republican government.*) To those Anglo-Saxon readers who never yet lived in a country where a man could not speak his mind on such simple subjects, this may sound trivial.

And then, on this peaceful society, came first treachery, then hatred and faction. Known supporters of the legal government were imprisoned if they did not escape, lies poured out of the wireless, the town church opened its arsenal. An old man, thinking his son might be involved in the rising, hanged himself. He knew his Guardia Civil. It was the first death, symbolical of that despair of social justice which underlies the Spanish stoicism. In time the tables turned and the Catalan expedition landed. Were the priests murdered, the nuns raped, the rebels executed? No. But one day four planes came without warning over the harbour at the hour of the Sunday promenade and in a few minutes they killed 55 Ibicencos; 42 were women or children under ten. That night the Anarchists shot every rebel prisoner and two of the three priests.

Ibiza came into Franco's Italian hands soon after, for the Anarchists left as inconsequentially as they had come. Mr. Paul got away in time and took his friend Cosmi with him. Mr. Paul's heart hardened. He had seen a little world at peace, had known its young people and the old, their hopes, their deep absorption in their customs which had a settled, working wisdom. He saw this destroyed; and in the measure that it conceals his personal grief and its defiances, this book is a clear-sighted valediction. He had learned about liberty and that it is dead unless it is religion.

The only thing that does not change is Spain. *Spanish Circus* has the interest of bringing to mind the curious parallels between events of to-day and those which led to the Napoleonic invasion of Spain. The story of Carlos IV, Maria Luisa, Godoy, her supposed lover and Fernando her son, with Napoleon cynically moving them about from across the frontier like a spider deciding at leisure how he will eat the fly, is superb material for the novelist. It is all in Goya. There is the honest, hunting king with his footman's face; there, horrifying as some arch and blowsy merry widow, is the queen with her bland and fatuous lover, created Prince of the Peace for having lost a war. Fernando, her son, stands thick-browed, guilty-eyed, mistrustful and unprepossessing nearlby, a strange idol for the men whom Goya drew in their ugly death agonies in the *dos de mayo*. A ridiculous *ménage à trois* is on the throne, alternatively pompous and


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childishly naive in its messages—has Godoy got his warm coat for the campaign? There are a comic Court which creaks like an old, top-heavy and gilded roundabout, a ramshackle army, an administration thick as fleas on the backs of the starving population—and all in a general atmosphere of dirt, ignorance, fanatical religion and grotesque family vanity. One might be not in Europe but in Paraguay. Yet when Godoy, penniless and alone, eked out the hours of his seedy exile in the gardens of the Palais Royal fifty years later, the scene had not substantially changed. Napoleon had tricked and bullied his way into Spain and had been slowly frozen out of that country so inhospitable to great armies and great schemes; the Bourbons were back, having learned nothing. The Spaniards behaved with ingratitude, not to say treachery; with the greatest treachery, for they were treacherous to themselves. Mr. Armstrong, as a temporary historian, states the story lucidly and with restraint lest the novelist get the better of him. To have its utmost effect the drama should have been carried on beyond the Maria Luisa period into Fernando's ghastly reign. For though he began looking like an indignant son and a patriot, he ended as a scoundrel. It is all a fascinating story, but Mr. Armstrong, in stopping short, has been too kind.

V. S. PRITCHETT

## AN EDUCATED ESSAYIST

**Daylight and Champaign.** Essays by G. M. YOUNG. *Cape.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

There are some qualities easier to regret when they are absent than define when they are present; and, foremost among these, I would cite the qualities of grace, elasticity and amplitude that result from an old-fashioned "liberal" education in the rare instances when it is intelligently employed. Reading through the swarming book-reviews in the Sunday newspaper, it is easy enough to pick out a number of writers who have received practically no education—a majority who have gobbled down a great deal of unassimilated culture, which they vomit up mechanically week by week—and a very few whose intelligence has been over-exercised. Mr. Young, on the other hand, is an educated critic: that is to say, his capacity for information is large, but his appetite is even larger: his opinions are fully formed, but his prejudices have not begun to harden. Yet, were I asked to explain exactly why it is that I prefer Mr. Young's essays to the productions of better known and far more generally publicised authors, I should find it exceedingly difficult to frame a reply.

Is it because he has an amusing and harmonious style? Mr. Young writes smoothly, writes naturally, yet writes with the kind of sensitiveness that seems actually to put us in touch with living ideas. We may accept the ideas or we may reject them. But ideas they are—not mere tiresome rearrangements of conventional patterns; while, setting them off, there is always a background of learning and sympathy. There is only one, very obvious, disadvantage. Nowadays, when the literary critic can very seldom venture on a classical quotation without a previous reference to the crib, Mr. Young's erudition is a trifle alarming. Does he realise, I wonder, that he knows too much? When I read his *Gibbon* (as far as I was concerned, an Introduction to the Method of Mr. G. M. Young) I was able to keep pace with the author's knowledge; but later publications have left me winded. To admire was inevitable: to follow, impossible. I remained breathless, surveying the extent of my own ignorance.

Such, for example, was the effect of Mr. Young's editorial contribution to that fascinating book, *Early Victorian England*, published not long ago by the Oxford University Press. Here, as elsewhere, the eagerness with which I grabbed at information that Mr. G. M. Young actually offered was counterbalanced by a feeling of sad stupefaction when I realised the variety of things that Mr. Young lightheartedly assumed I already knew. No, I was *not* on familiar terms with the heroine of that to-day slightly obscure, once highly popular and tendentious, Victorian novel which Mr. Young appeared to imagine I had read and memorised. I had merely a nodding acquaintance with this moralist or that historian. Had the writer cast me for the rôle of Macaulay's schoolboy: or was he genuinely unconscious that I had dropped behind?

I am inclined to believe that our parting was involuntary. After studying *Daylight and Champaign*, a collection of articles and reprinted reviews, I understand that Mr. Young's culture presupposes a certain reciprocity of intelligence, and that we must not blame him—but the age—if it fails to appear. For his new book is formidably, yet graciously, learned. It is a pity, perhaps, that the exigencies of a journalistic livelihood should occasionally have dictated themes in which Mr. Young would seem to have had no real interest: but, even then, he has circled pleasantly around the issue. Thus, *Mr. and Mrs. Dickens* left him rather bored. Instead of commenting, as he might have done, on the connection that exists between the failure of Dickens' own marriage and the attitude that he adopted, in his rôle of novelist-moralist, towards questions of marriage and married love, Mr. Young notes various agreeable passages and proceeds to a criticism of Dickens' later prose style, ending up with an appreciation of his splendid sunset. But, here too, he has many penetrating things to say. "Nothing will make of Dickens a simple character. . . ." Yet, whereas Thackeray, equally perplexed and equally disingenuous, always strikes us as something of a moral humbug, Dickens' genius rises superior to the most hateful drawbacks. He triumphed over himself and the age he lived in. Preacher and humbug by profession, he was an artist by accident.

Movements rather than people absorb this essayist. In reading the essays of Lytton Strachey or, among living writers, Mr. Desmond MacCarthy, we notice that they write best when their approach is most personal, and that it is apparently with some relief that they abandon more general considerations and throw themselves into the analysis of a personal situation or into the dissection of human motives. In Mr. Young's work, the tendency is often reversed. The least interesting items in his new book are devoted to individual men and women, Mr. and Mrs. Dickens, Swift, Lord and Lady Amberley; while the longest and finest are concerned with subjects that do not demand detailed personal portraiture but tend to present individuals as a part of their age. Thus, *The New Cortegiano* (which bears a somewhat loose reference to Mr. Compton Mackenzie's *Literature in My Time*) deals with the breakdown of Victorian middle-brow culture, which Mr. Young conceives of as having possessed a unity that English culture had never achieved before and certainly cannot boast of at the present day:

> There was (he writes) about the mid-Victorian culture, in the after-glow of which Mr. Mackenzie and I grew up, a certain unitary

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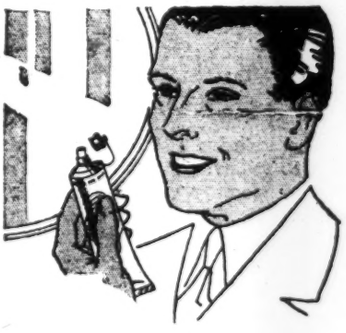

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quality, of doing, thinking and appreciating, which will be found, I believe, to be the note of all great and characteristic cultures. One can, of course, see the dangers ahead of a universal competence. . . . The Victorian culture escaped them, but at a cost we are still paying. It did not run down into universal amateurishness. But it was doubly fractured: vertically, into professionalism, laterally, along its weakest stratum into—let us adopt the later word and call it high-brow and low-brow.

Elsewhere, he suggests that "a true, a sound, a social culture must be middle-brow, the high-brow elements serving as exploratory antennae, to discover and capture new ideas for the middle-brow mass to assimilate." The trouble nowadays is that these antennae, though wriggling sensitively enough at the extreme tips—lashing and squirming like the lizard's dismembered tail—seem to have lost all genuine connection with the central mass; and it is one of the greatest charms of Mr. Young's literary method that he has not yet quite abandoned the earlier attitude. He writes both as an aesthete and a man of the world—as a critic whose standards are rooted in the Victorian Age and a spectator and admirer of the present who is not insensible to the charm of modern literature. His erudition may be formidable, but it is seldom ponderous: his canons are strict, but they are never arrogant or merely exclusive.

PETER QUENNELL

## MONKEYS

**Just Monkeys.** By MAURICE WILSON. *Country Life.* 10s. 6d.

One of the most attractive houses at the London Zoo—the new artists' house overlooking the canal—is permanently closed to the public. There, one supposes, an animal sits while a group of artists frown and slash. If we could see in, a surprising number of attitudes might emerge on paper: the leopard, say, impressing on one designer its eventual shape as a crouching ornament in glass, on another its sphinxlike head and shoulders, on yet another the Jap pansies of its spots. Unlikely, perhaps, that any of them would represent for us a *leopard*, the bored, inscrutable, superb creation behind bars to which our eyes return. And Mr. Maurice Wilson's monkeys? They are charming, delicate, sad, boisterous, perverse; they sent me off at once to take another look at the originals. I passed by most of the apes—the ourang-outang thoughtfully picking his nose, the chimps, a sad race of syphilitics; their plight is abject; and yet these are the cages round which crowds collect for entertainment. How different when one comes to the monkeys! Out of doors, they too tend to hug themselves and sit in corners, but besides the cartoon they offer of ourselves—here a bow-legged cavalryman accepting a banana, there a Diana monkey with the face of Confucius turning somersaults—their movements are a delight to follow. Watch any small monkey turning over a nut-shell or an empty paper bag; boredom (a large part of their lives, as of ours) could not be expressed more daintily. Some of them seem happy—the concolor gibbons, for example, whose whipping cry reaches to the other end of Regent's Park. In their large cage near the bandstand they give the most dazzling display of acrobatics, preceded by a strange concerted hooting and chirruping, in the world. The camel opposite, if it troubles to see as far, must sometimes be amazed by the spectacle of these flying mannikins. At five-minute intervals throughout the day some powerful instinct impels them to sing and whizz through the air; when the gardens close, they are still heard.

Mr. Wilson has an excellent female concolor gibbon (pale fawn instead of black) on the cover of his book; "spectral," too, in the text is suggestive. His Diana monkey is as good. He has caught well, also, the negroid profile of a baby orang, the drill's metal mask, the hamadryas with its fierce snout and priestly cope. Most difficult of all, in several drawings he gets the expression of the eyes. It is the eyes, not so broken as the lion's or dependent as the dog's, which attract; they belong to an animal, friendly up to a point, which will still play and run off. The pig-tailed monkeys, of which there are a number at Regent's Park, seem to have appealed specially to Mr. Wilson, and in several of his drawings he reproduces their surprised yawning stare. What then has he missed? Among possible sitters only, I think, Humbold's monkey, a blackamoor in velvet, and some of the smaller capuchins and marmosets. In general, he does better with colour than plain line; the loose thistly outline he gives to his black and white figures is sometimes too untidy for his subjects. But on the whole, he succeeds vividly and sparely. This book, when the time comes, will make a perfect Christmas present.

G. W. STONIER

## CONSTABLE

**Memories of the Life of John Constable, R.A.** By C. R. LESLIE. Edited and enlarged by the HON. ANDREW SHIRLEY. *Medici*. 35*s*.

In July, 1845, Leslie brought out the second edition of his memoirs of the life of John Constable. This was considerably fuller than the edition of 1837, but regrettably "without the beautiful engravings of Constable's works with which in its first state it was adorned." The present book has been revised and enlarged by Mr. Andrew Shirley. Where it has been possible letters curtailed or censored by Leslie have been included, and wherever fresh material has come to light it has been inserted in the form of explanatory paragraphs quite distinct from the 1845 text. The 1937 edition is handsomely produced in a style which is now a little out of date. It weighs just under 4 lb., and the top edge is nicely gilt. The 230 illustrations (12 in colour) are scattered through the book. There is still no complete list of Constable's works and their owners, but there is an excellent biographical section containing details about all the figures mentioned, a good index and Mr. Shirley's introduction. Though the last is marred for some by its assumption that there has been a "revolution in French painting" for which Constable was responsible, it is a very lucid exposition of the artist's life and work and includes the results of some valuable research into Constable's portrait painting.

The late Sir Charles Holmes, in introducing a volume* of Constable's letters, wrote that "Leslie's well-known *Life and Letters of John Constable, R.A.*, will remain the standard biography of Constable and rank with the best works of the kind. . . . Yet the picture of the man that it paints is in some respects incomplete." The criticism is just. Anything which by the sharp Victorian light might reflect discredit on the artist was excluded. Leslie was a devoted friend, a worthy artist, and in many ways an excellent biographer, but he was also a bit of an old woman. He sacrificed liveliness and even accuracy in his anxiety not to offend. Some of the omissions Mr. Shirley has been able to make good from surviving letters and other external sources. But the inside story, the conversation from day to day, Constable's way of setting about a picture—things that an intimate and colleague like Leslie could have told, have died with him. The whole work has the stamp of a public utterance. The Constable that Leslie presented to the world is compounded of innocence and courage in adversity and gentle wit. He is at once the best of men and the dullest. Its very faultlessness makes his portrait unbalanced and unconvincing. Where there is pride and noble resignation one instinctively looks for carping and intolerance to compensate for them. Leslie's Constable was sinisterly virtuous. Mr. Shirley's additions, emendations and comments destroy some of the model character, but they give the human being life. It is reassuring to read that Constable had enough venom in him to call a composition of girls on a raft by Etty (who had defeated him in the R.A. election), "Etty's bumboat." Though his estimate of Constable's character was well-meaningly deceptive, Leslie's admiration and understanding of his friend's quality as an artist are years ahead of his time. No other artist's biography contains so many good things about painting as this one. Constable was a realist; not the first or the greatest, but an incessant observer of nature. His talent for drawing was very slight, but he was singularised by the intensity of his love of and interest in the countryside where he was born. Lack of a stylish brush, of the ability to invent and of the urgent need to earn a living made his career different from Gainsborough's, who wished he could have been a landscape-painter only. In one respect, at least, Constable was first of the modern artists. He was the first (except old Rembrandt) to paint to please himself "—a very particular person." He knew that he had small chance of success with the amateurs of picture making. "When I sit down to paint I put every other picture out of my head," he wrote, and on another occasion he said a little bitterly that he would never be popular, "I have no handling." Delacroix, haunted by the evil spirits of style and the grand manner, misunderstood him, admiring bold handling instead of observation and integrity. Theodore Rousseau learnt the lesson much better and Constable's tradition, shorn of its freshness and its glitter, continued as the realism of the dingy school of Barbizon. It took Courbet to put life into realism again and it wasn't till Impressionism and Divisionism were well on their

* *Letters of John Constable, R.A. to C.R. Leslie, R.A.* Constable, 1931.


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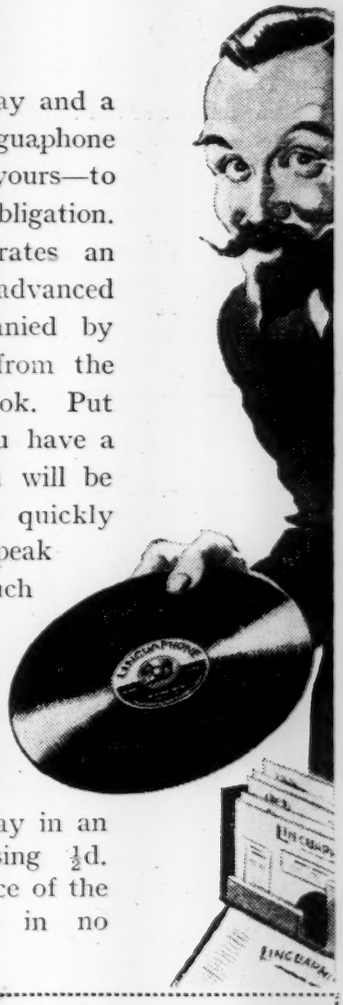

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way that anyone thought of Constable or remembered that his greens were the more vivid for being composed of a variety of tints. Only in so far as Impressionism is a growth out of Realism can Constable be claimed as its ancestor. Constable was "the painter of a moment," the painter of "dews and breezes," but he valued his work for its truth to nature. A reference to decorative qualities would have made him very annoyed. "He manages the effect by intricate pattern rather than by imitative drawing" comments Mr. Shirley; one is reminded of Constable's retort to Blake, "I meant it for drawing."

No painter of his standing did so many unsuccessful works. His enormous canvases might be designed specially to show up his faults, his tiny sketches in attempting the impossible often achieve nothing but a restless virtuosity. His life was unfortunate, too—despaired of at birth, long thwarted in love, when at last he is happily married his troubles are only beginning. The seven children were all alarmingly delicate, and their mother died of consumption. It was a troublesome time. Scarlet fever, whooping cough, the Reform Bill and toothache, kept the family man in low spirits. At the end of his life he began to take an interest in geology. "It (a lecture) was on volcanoes," he wrote to Leslie, "most interesting indeed, we inhabit a fearful planet."

GRAHAM BELL

## PORTRAIT OF A GREAT MAN

**Great Contemporaries.** By WINSTON S. CHURCHILL. *Thornton Butterworth.* 21s.

The purchaser of this book gets his great contemporaries at a shilling apiece. The twenty-one were certainly contemporaries, but there is considerable doubt whether the adjective great really applies to nineteen of them. Their lives and characters superimposed upon one another in the form of a composite photograph, would they, even so, make the composite photograph of a great man? One doubts it, though they would produce, thus treated, an extremely lively and interesting photograph of what Mr. Churchill considers to be a great man. And even that would need qualification, for the photograph would naturally be heavily weighted on the side of politics. For Mr. Churchill's twenty-one great contemporaries are made up of three kings (of whom two have lost their thrones), four soldiers, one writer, twelve politicians, and Lawrence of Arabia.

A book of this kind, made up of occasional essays written at different times, often in the form of newspaper articles and reviews, is nearly always a dreary, snippety affair. That this book is an exception is due to Mr. Churchill's lively mind, his shrewd judgment of character, and his considerable powers as a writer. Some of the essays are brilliant; there is something worth reading in every one of them, except the three or four in which his political or economic prejudices have got the better of his judgment, eyesight, and sense of humour, and left him nothing but rather empty rhetoric.

It is significant that Rosebery, Balfour, Chamberlain, and Morley were the "four most pleasing and brilliant men" to whom Mr. Churchill ever listened. They belonged to the Victorian age and were certainly the highest political products of that peculiar culture. This book shows that they and it have all Mr. Churchill's sympathies. And it is, perhaps, because he feels them to be sympathetic to him that he is able to bring them, their lives and characters, so vividly before the reader. The portraits which he paints of them—and of many others in this book—are not "academy portraits," with all the wrinkles and creases smoothed out, and the charm, beauty, and nobility more than human. They are portraits of real people, and the artist with great skill reveals by a line here or a splash of colour there the strange mixture of good and bad, strength and weakness which are included in the mind and character of all men, great or small. If one had to select two essays out of this book as showing Mr. Churchill at his best in making one see through and all round one of his characters, they would be those on Balfour and Asquith. The Asquith which Mr. Churchill gives us is very different from the statesman who emerges from the pages of Mr. Spender's biography, but there can be little doubt which is the more real. And the following sentences describing Balfour's ruthless passage from Asquith's Cabinet into that of Mr. Lloyd George may be quoted as an example of Mr. Churchill's insight and brilliance:

> It is impossible here to dwell upon Balfour's part in the complex and even more fateful Cabinet convulsion which resulted in the substitution of Lloyd George for Asquith in the crisis of December, 1916. But nothing is more instructive than to follow the dispassionate, cool, correct and at the same time ruthless manner in which Balfour threaded the labyrinth without reproach. He passed from one Cabinet to the other, from the Prime Minister who was his champion to the Prime Minister who had been his most severe critic, like a powerful graceful cat walking delicately and unsoiled across a rather muddy street.

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## SCIENCE AND ART

**Science and Music.** By SIR JAMES JEANS. *Cambridge University Press.* 8s. 6d.

In the past Sir James Jeans has occasionally committed himself in his popular scientific expositions to some extravagant statements—or so they seemed to the lay reader—and it was not without foreboding that I took up his latest book, *Science and Music*. This foreboding, however, was not justified, for Sir James has in this book confined himself to giving in simple and exceptionally lucid terms a description of the mechanism of the human ear, an analysis of sound into period frequency and pitch and an examination of the physical basis of harmony. All this is done with precision and economy, and a great many well-chosen illustrations assist his exposition step by step. Sir James himself states on p. 152:

> In the present book we are dealing with subjects which lie partly within the province of science and partly within that of art, and the boundary between the two provinces is not always perfectly clear. If the question is debated as to whether the music of John Sebastian Bach is superior to that of his son, Philipp Emanuel, science can bring nothing to the discussion. The question is purely one for artists, and it is quite *conceivable*, although *perhaps rather improbable*, that they *may* not be able to agree as to the answer.

In quoting the above paragraph I have taken the liberty of putting some of Sir James's words into italics in order to emphasise to the reader the undogmatic delicacy with which Sir James treads upon ground he has forbidden to himself. This is a sign of grace, and as an artist and not a scientist I must salute it with enthusiasm.

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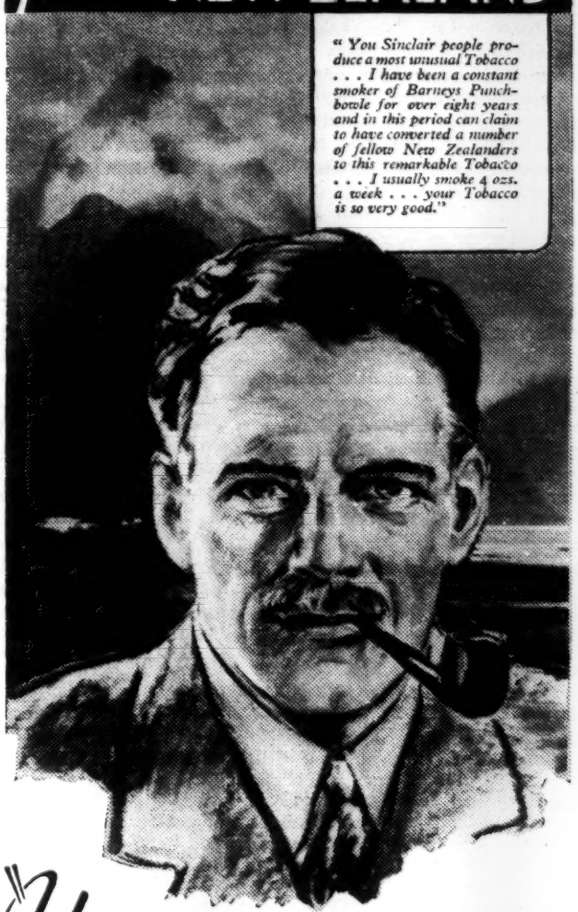
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Nevertheless, it is possible that there lies at the bottom of science and of art the same fundamental reality and that finally there ought not to be disagreement between them. The trouble is that the world is full both of inferior scientists and of inferior artists, and that only the greatest in each sphere is fully aware of the mysteries and difficulties of his subject. It would ill become me to suggest that Sir James is not aware that his scientific descriptions in this book are sometimes clear and simple to the point almost of illusion. Yet this will be the merit of the book for most readers. We can all be taught simple arithmetic so as to be able to count, add, multiply and subtract without being plunged into the mathematical mystery of number. The mystery of number is for those few, more peculiarly gifted mathematically, who, when they find what seemed to be firm ground sinking under their feet, are not plunged into permanent mental disorder.

Sir James himself has put into one paragraph what is, in truth, the narrow ground of this book:

> If the question is whether the music of either Bach (J. S. or P. E.) is superior to that produced by a chorus of cats singing on the roof, there will be little doubt as to the answer. The artists will agree and science is able to explain to a large extent why they agree.

This is true, and the explanation is to be found in *Science and Music*, so far as present science can explain it. I draw attention, however, to Sir James's modest "to a large extent," for, strange as it may seem, the human ear itself introduces changes into sounds. Referring to the changes introduced by transmission, Sir James says:

> These changes are, however, insignificant in comparison with the changes introduced by the ear itself. We shall see later that this may add entirely new musical notes to those which are played by the orchestra. It may also—and this not only with people who are partially deaf—filter out certain other notes of high and low pitch, entirely refusing to transmit them to the brain. Even if it does not do this, it invariably favours certain sounds at the expense of others, so that the various sounds are heard in proportions quite different from those in which they were played by the orchestra.

On pages 245–250 Sir James gives an interesting physiological description of the human ear. It contains a membrane of which he says:

> If we have to compare it with a familiar object, by far the best to choose is a grand piano built with enormous complexity but on a diminutive scale. Although the membrane is only an 8,000th of an inch in thickness, and 1¼ inches in length, yet about 24,000 fibres are embedded in it, ranging in length from a 50th to a 170th of an inch. The short fibres, which correspond to the treble wires of the piano, are very tightly stretched, while those at the other end—the bass wires—are much looser.

But this complexity of the aural membrane is a mere nothing to the complexity of the brain behind, which governs, selects and understands what it hears. This is where the artist comes in, and here is the seat of the mystery. Sir James admits that "no completely satisfactory theory of hearing, or of the mechanism of the ear has yet been found." I am not surprised. How, for example, is the *quality* of tone which the human ear can distinguish between one pianist and another playing on the same instrument detected with its psychological associations? How is it that a musician may discern the *character* of a Toscanini conducting an orchestra or of a Schnabel playing the pianoforte just as certainly as a poet can detect the character of a Chekhov from his stories—stories in which the artist has kept himself and his opinions out and revealed himself only in his style? We do not know how it is done, and it is refreshing to have Sir James admit on a much more elementary plane that science has no answers to give to a number of questions. This is all the more valuable to-day, when to half-baked and uninstructed minds the cheap fraud of pseudo-scientific criticism is constantly offered. The very word "scientific" has been debased into a sort of sledge-hammer with which to intimidate artists by literary men who are utterly incapable of reading, still less of understanding, an elementary scientific text-book on any subject. It is a pleasure to recognise that Sir James Jeans is too good a scientist to fall into this error.

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## SHORTER NOTICES

**The World is Young.** By RUPERT CROFT COOKE. *Hodder.* 15*s.*
**Mexico Around Me.** By MAX MILLER. *Chatto.* 10*s.* 6*d.*
**Peruvian Pageant.** By BLAIR NILES. *Murray.* 16*s.*

These are three diverse accounts from Latin America, the first by an Englishman, the other two by United States citizens. The books have nothing at all in common. Mr. Croft Cooke describes two years of callow youth in a suburb of Buenos Ayres, Mrs. Niles rambles through Peru accompanied by an oppressive sense of history, Mr. Miller sees Mexico conventionally—from train, hotel and horseback. Compared with the excited nasal tones in which Mr. Miller puts the blackguard Cortéz on the spot, or Mrs. Miller describes the painted, carved and gilded coaches which rolled through Lima in the viceroy's time, Mr. Croft Cooke views his youth with commendable objectivity. It was gauche, idealistic, ambitious and unreasonable. He arrived in San Isidro to teach in an imitation English preparatory school. Instead of mixing with the imitation English he attached himself to a set of Latins, as young and callow as himself—all this is a little like early H. G. Wells in exotic surroundings. He does the local characters very well, expecially a would-be Hitler of the River Plate, "he was a little bloated man, who always wore a yachting cap." Though his adventures are not in themselves of any interest, described in this distantly humorous way they are very readable. Mrs. Niles' book is "something new in travel books." It is travel wrapped in a blanket of arty-crafty atmosphere. Mrs. Niles' manner recalls culture as seen in American advertisements. She is an inheritor of the Thornton Wilder glamour, whose considerable literary skill is vitiated by a custom of writing with refrains. There are twenty-one good photographs in this book. Mr. Miller has none of Mrs. Niles' knack. He gives a picture—or rather an impression, of a nice American stomping through Mexico. He is amused by corruption, angered by injustice and proud to shake hands with a hero of the people or to lay a wreath on a liberator's grave. It is ironical that though Mrs. Niles leaves one sick of history, Mr. Miller makes one want to know more.

**Farming England.** By A. G. STREET. *Batsford.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The "British Heritage" series is, or should be, well enough known by now for its photographs and a sensitive appreciation of the beauty of England's Past. In this, the latest addition to the series, both these are again well presented, so well, indeed, that a reader would have been content with that alone, and probably only too content to think of farming, also, as one of the things our ancestors did so well. Batsfords, however, are to be sincerely congratulated upon choosing A. G. Street to write this number, and to have published a book which is of real importance to present-day farming. For Mr. Street is not only acutely conscious of the various landscapes of England and their charm; he is first, foremost, and all the time a farmer: a farmer, moreover, who is successful and knows the intricacies and effects of Milk Marketing Boards, Sugar Beet and Wheat Quotas; a farmer who can be coherent and is able to write well. The introduction is one which in such a series gives the reader a wholesome shock. It is a vigorous plea for

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Oct. 26.—HAROLD PATON: "The Law Affecting Other Forms of Propaganda."
Nov. 2.—NEIL LAWSON: "Censorship."
Nov. 9.—GEOFFREY WILSON: "The Law and Arrested Persons."
Nov. 16.—G. H. C. BING: "The Powers of the Police."
Nov. 23.—W. H. THOMPSON: "Recent Legislation and Judicial Decisions."
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Sat., Nov. 27: 1st Session, 5–7 p.m.—KINGSLEY MARTIN: "A Review of Civil Liberties."
Evening: Social.
Sun., Nov. 28: 1st Session, 10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.—DINGLE FOOT, M.P.: "Civil Liberties and Departmental Powers."
2nd Session, 5–7 p.m.—W. H. THOMPSON: "Civil Liberties and Industrial Organisation."
Inclusive Fees for the Conference (Sat. afternoon to Mon. morning): Members, 25s.; Non-Members, 30s.
Attendance at Sessions and Social (excluding meals): Members, 2s. 6d.; Non-Members, 3s.

### SUNDAY CONFERENCE

"CIVIL LIBERTY IN INDIA."

Oct. 17th, Transport House, Smith Square.

11 a.m. to 1 p.m.—PROF. H. J. LASKI: "Civil Liberty in India."
2.30–4.30 p.m.—LESTER HUTCHINSON: "Police Organisation and Methods." DR. MULK RAJ ANAND: "Press, Publications and Propaganda."
5.15—6.30 p.m.—V. K. KRISHNA MENON: "Civil Liberty in Bengal."
7.30–9.30 p.m.—DR. K. S. SHELVANKAR: "Civil Liberty and Peasants and Workers." HAROLD PATON: "Constitution and Civil Liberty."
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FILM CENSORSHIP: In 1935 the Council won a legal case relating to non-commercial miniature films (largely used for educational and cultural purposes). Since then the Home Office has not proceeded with its regulations to control these by censorship.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION: Legal action against police interference with pacifists was successfully taken, since when anti-war demonstrations at the Air Displays have met with no opposition from the Authorities.

DESPOTISM IN NORTHERN IRELAND: Our 1936 Report exposed a state of virtual despotism under the Special Powers Acts. H. G. Wells wrote: "Read it—if you care for human freedom and dignity under the British flag—and form your own conclusions."

THURLOE SQUARE: In May, 1936, mounted police made, without warning, a baton charge into a crowd listening to a clergyman addressing an anti-fascist meeting half a mile away from the Albert Hall. The council's Commission of Inquiry and report made very grave accusations against the police.

ANTI-SEMITISM: By careful observation and investigation the council furnished Members of Parliament with facts to raise the question of Jew-baiting with the Home Secretary. Legal steps were also taken where the civil rights of Jews were involved.

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the nationalisation of the land. The epilogue sums up in better and just words the state of agriculture in England.

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The survey which Mr. Street makes of our farms is, for the space at his disposal, a great achievement, for he manages to give briefly a description in which the actual methods of cultivation, the look of the landscape, and the outlook of the inhabitants are admirably balanced. Only in dealing with "The warm and wet South-West" and the fenlands does the reader feel that more space was essential; but these are small faults in an excellent book.

## GRAMOPHONE NOTES

I WISH that gramophone users could be induced to experiment more with unfamiliar music, both old and new. Records are expensive, and reluctance to commit oneself to an album set which one may never succeed in enjoying is comprehensible. Nevertheless the list of forthcoming deletions from the H.M.V. Connoisseur catalogue makes sad reading. Among the records which will not be available after October 31st are many excellent and quite recent recordings of fine music off the beaten track: the Verdi *String Quartet*, the Couperin *Concert dans le Goût Théâtral*, the Mozart *Piano and Wind Quintet* (K. 452); and, notably among the moderns, two works by Bloch, the *Quintet for Piano and Strings* and the chamber *Concerto Grosso*. If the removal of the Bloch meant that the public had sampled and couldn't abide him, well and good; but of course it means no such things. What it does mean is that the high price of record (doubtless unavoidable) and the equally inevitable reluctance of most dealers to let records leave their shops on approval have developed in the public enormous powers of sales resistance. The endlessly proliferating "Society" movement is essentially a successful attempt to break down this sales resistance. Something more or less unhackneyed, backed by the support of friendly critics, is placed before the public as a "Society": that is to say, in a limited edition; and immediately the public, which would otherwise have said to itself: "Yes, I must go round and hear that, some day," says instead: "By Jove, I don't want to miss that," and orders it. I sympathise with the people who rail against the continually extended range of Society issues (and it is indeed maddening to be unable to buy one superb Mozart or Beethoven Sonata or Haydn Quartet without paying for two or three more which we may not particularly want); but I sympathise even more with the companies who, when they do publish important novelties in the ordinary way, have to withdraw them a year or so later. If the two Bloch sets had been issued as Vol. I of a "Bloch Society," they would have found four times as many purchasers. It is difficult to suggest a remedy: if the B.B.C. could arrange to broadcast, during their month of issue and at a time when working people are at leisure, *all* the important new records, that would help; gramophonists are in general a home-loving race who would easily contrive to be in for such occasions. Furthermore, people may soon begin to realise that the standard masterpieces of Brahms and Beethoven and the rest turn up so constantly in the broadcasting year that it is hardly necessary to have them all on the gramophone as well; they may come to think of records as avenues of adventure, some leading towards those glorious classics which we all too seldom hear—*Don Giovanni*, *Falstaff*, late Beethoven, and so on, some to such newer country as we have reason to suppose will repay careful tilling—Walton, Bloch, Sibelius, Berg, Bliss.

All this explains why I give first place this month to the recording on three H.M.V.'s of Bliss's *Music for Strings*. Both performance (B.B.C. Orchestra, Boult) and recording are masterly, and the music seems to me a really valuable contribution to the modern repertory: after a dozen or so hearings I like it better than ever. Now that our younger men have swept out the Continental shavings that once filled their workshops, we are beginning to perceive a good deal of sound Elgarian oak lying about. The influence of Elgar is often to be seen in *Music for Strings*, and not only because a certain spaciousness and the brilliant treatment of the medium recall Elgar's *Introduction and Allegro*; for in the middle movement there are touches of the wistful melancholy of the *'Cello Concerto*. This is not to say that the music is imitative, but that it is solidly rooted in a sound English tradition. Bliss has in fact developed a musical personality of his own quite unlike his twenties period of smirks and clever flippancies; and this is all to the good, for our English composers never look their best when attempting to play trains with Satie or Prokoviev.

Beecham and the L.P.O. have recorded Brahms's *Tragic Overture* on three Columbia sides, the fourth occupied by a *Figaro* Overture which would be sparkling but for the excessive number of strings employed. The Brahms is a fine work, with a middle section rendered exceptionally attractive by Beecham's delicately precise rhythm. The recording is excellent, but intending buyers cannot neglect the H.M.V. version conducted by Boult. The massive *sostenuto* of the B.B.C. strings and brass shows to great advantage, in the first and last sections of this overture, as against the Philharmonic style; for all their elegance, the latter incline to snatch and peck at music which demands before all a pure and powerful *legato*. Bruno Walter's performance with the Vienna Philharmonic (five H.M.V.'s) of Brahms's *First Symphony* revived my interest in a symphony of which I tire more easily than of the other three Brahms. The records suffer from excessive reverberation, but not so badly as some recent Vienna work; the actual quality of the tone is rich and true. Walter's handling is spacious, and extremely tender in those flowing themes and flowering tendrils of counterpoint which are, for me, the heart of Brahms's genius; it is, that is to say, a very lyrical reading, happiest in the two middle movements. Toscanini's irresistible forging ahead is more effective in such magniloquent passages as the beginning of the first and the end of the last movements; but there is no *recorded* Brahms I find so satisfactory as this. Of the Grieg *Piano Concerto* the only fairly modern recording is the Backhaus, and that is cut; so that the field was open for Gieseking's new recording (four Cols.). When I heard Gieseking play this work at Queen's Hall last year, I thought his attempt to be leonine and tremendous was quite unsuccessful; to be plain, he banged. Though there are still some wrong notes, that impression is almost effaced by the records, whose excellent balance gives a very fair picture of a work part bombast, part delight. Minor orchestral records are


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a charming *Khovantchina Introduction* (Moussorgsky) by the Boston Orchestra (Koussevitsky) on a single H.M.V., a sound *Tannhäuser Prelude to Act* 3 (Stokowski and Philadelphians) on two H.M.V.'s, and an outstandingly good single H.M.V. of Mozart's *Rondo in D* (K. 382) played by Edwin Fischer and his Chamber Orchestra.

There is another Mozart *Rondo* which I unaccountably overlooked last month, that in *A minor* (K. 511), a piece of melancholy and subtle music never recorded before. Paderewski's piano is excellently reproduced; the playing itself, despite mannerisms and an occasional sense of stiffening fingers, incomparably poetic. All Mozartians should hear this one (H.M.V.). Of the October piano records the most interesting is a single Col. of Petri in Busoni's *Fantasia in Memory of My Father*. This is the first specimen of the greater Busoni to find its way on to the lists, and anyone who feels at home with late Beethoven or the Bach Chorale Preludes should hear this moving record of quietist music. Busoni calls it "after J. S. Bach," but it is not a transcription. A flowing contrapuntal texture is woven around a chorale theme and the carol *In dulci jubilo*. Unless I am mistaken, a whole new world of spiritual beauty is enshrined in this record. In the second volume of Chopin *Nocturnes* (Rubinstein: H.M.V., six records) the playing is lovely, the recording not quite the best, while the music often reveals Chopin at his weakest. Even the most beautiful ideas maunder on too long, and there are middle sections so square that in an English composer they would be ascribed to the influence of Hymns A. & M. Of Beethoven's glorious *'Cello Sonata, Op.* 69, there are now three recordings, all of them good: Casals-Schulhof on H.M.V., Grummer-Kempff on Decca, and now Feuermann-Hess on Columbia. The new records are very satisfactory, and beautifully recorded; though Feuermann is not a Casals, the improved balance will recommend them to many. As a matter of fact, the balance is most perfectly held in the Decca set, which also has the advantage of an incomparable performance of the piano part by Kempff, but is marred by occasional clumsiness and false intonation from the 'cellist. Myself, I still prefer the Casals.

The Parlophone Co. have shown most unusual enterprise in inaugurating a series of reprints of Famous Voices of the Past. Their first issue gave us Anselmi, that admirable lyrical tenor, in *arias* from Verdi's *Luisa Miller* and Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*. Discounting a quaint piano accompaniment and some shrillness at the top caused by recording, this is a lovely specimen of *bel canto*: such steady tone and refined musicianship are seldom found in combination. The second record, duller in reproduction, is very interesting, since it contains the only Wagnerian recording made by the great Lilli Lehmann (*Walküre*—"Du bist der Lenz") coupled with the Countess's first *aria* from *Figaro*. At the time of recording (1907) she was fifty-nine, and despite decades of Brünhildes and Isoldes her voice was in marvellous condition. Her compass and versatility were astonishing; what other Brünhilde has also sung the Wood-bird, Sieglinde, *and* Fricka? Not to mention Norma and the Queen of the Night! Other discs (which may still, I believe, be ordered from the Parlophone Co.) give a better idea than this of her vocal powers; notably the *arias* from *Norma*, *Traviata*, and *Don Giovanni*. The transition from these splendours to the vocal records of to-day is eased by two further Pagliughi records (Parlo.) which enhance the brilliant impression already made by this coloratura soprano; indeed her *Sonnambula* aria ("Ah non credea") is second to none in purity of line and pathos; it is backed by "Convien partir" from *La Figlia del Reggimento*. Her other record has two *arias* from Bellini's *Puritani*: the first act polonaise is charmingly done, but the exquisite *andante* of the Mad Scene is too hurried to make its full effect. Now, when are we to hear Mme. Pagliughi at Covent Garden? A new Italian tenor of considerable ability, Galliano Masini, is heard in arias from *La Bohème* and *Cavalleria*; but the music appears to have been transposed down a semitone (Col.). Muzio's *O del mio amato ben* (Donaudy) and *Se tu m'ami* (Pergolesi) make the most attractive of her records I have yet heard (Col.). Lotte Lehmann (H.M.V.) sings three Schumann songs; but the American recording is disastrous. Maria Müller (H.M.V.) is fair in the two Wagner "Studies for *Tristan*," *Träume* and *Im Treibhaus*, but in tone and intelligence far beneath Tiana Lemnitz's Decca record of the same two songs. The silver-voiced Elisabeth Schumann (H.M.V.) continues her admirable pilgrimage through the less familiar Schubert; her latest record couples *Frühlingstraum* (from the *Winterreise* cycle) with the adorable *Einsame*, in which Schubert sings the charms of cosy, country solitude. (With such records it is criminal not to issue a leaflet containing text and translation.) Another of her records houses comfortably no less than four Schuberts, of which the jewel is *Nacht und Träume*. Both are perfection: neither Schubert, Mme. Schumann, Gerald Moore, nor H.M.V. lets us down.

Finally there is another "actuality" Covent Garden recording (on two Cols.) of excerpts from *Die Meistersinger*: the Chorales from Acts 1 and 3, and the Prize Song in its final form. Torsten Ralf is well above the general run of Teutonic Walthers, but the recording suffers greatly from lack of bass. The hand of Beecham is evident in the impetuous orchestral phrases which punctuate the opening chorale. A representative Beecham set of the opera would be widely welcomed, though he is not for me the ideal *Meistersinger* conductor: he sees the drama from the point of view of Walther, whereas Wagner saw it from the point of view of Sachs.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

NOTABLE NUMBERS
73 HIGH STREET, PORTSMOUTH — George Meredith, famous poet and novelist was born here on February 12th, 1828. His first poem was published July 4th, 1849. Some of his best known novels are the Ordeal of Richard Feverel, the Adventures of Harry Richmond and Diana of The Crossways.
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# Week-end Competitions

## No. 396

**Set by Desmond Shawe-Taylor**

Suppose that either Gibbon, Dr. Johnson or Queen Victoria were to re-appear and give us their views on our present foreign policy. The usual prizes (Two Guineas and Half a Guinea) are offered for the best entry in not more than 300 words: more than mere imitation of their style is required.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, October 22nd.
2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.
3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.
4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

# London Amusements

## MATINEES

*All at 2.30 p.m. unless otherwise stated.*

**ALDWYCH.** Housemaster. Wed., Sat.

**CAMBRIDGE.** The First Legion. Thurs., Sat.

**COLISEUM.** St. Moritz. Daily, 2.30.

**COMEDY.** The Last Straw. Tues., Fri.

**DRURY LANE.** Crest of the Wave. Wed., Sat.

**DUCHESS.** Time and the Conways. W. & S.

**DUKE of YORK'S.** Black Limelight. W., Sat.

**GARRICK.** Sarah Simple. Mon., Thurs.

**GLOBE.** "Blondie White." Wed. & Sat.

**HIPPODROME.** "Hide and Seek." Th. & S.

**HIS MAJESTY'S.** Balalaika. Wed. & Sat.

**LYRIC.** Victoria Regina. Wed. & Thurs.

**NEW.** Bonnet Over the Windmill. W., S.

**PLAYHOUSE.** Whiteoaks. Wed., Thurs., Sat.

**QUEENS.** Richard II. Wed. & Sat.

**ROYALTY.** I Have Been Here Before. Th., S.

**ST. JAMES'S.** Old Music. Wed., Thurs.

**STRAND.** A Spot of Bother. Tues., Thurs.

**VICT. PAL.** Busman's Honeymoon. W., S.

**WESTMINSTER.** Anything But the Truth. Wed. & Sat. next.

**WYNDHAM'S.** George & Margaret. W., S.

## THEATRES

**ALDWYCH.** Over 390 Perfs. Tem. 6404.
8.30. Mats., WED. and SAT., at 2.30.
**HOUSEMASTER**
A Farcical Comedy by IAN HAY.

**CAMBRIDGE.** (Tem. 6056.) 8.30. Th., Sat., 2.30.
**THE FIRST LEGION**
C. V. France. Franklin Dyall. Colin Keith-Johnston.
**THE FIRST LEGION**

**COLISEUM,** Charing X. Tem. 3161 (7 lines).
2.30 and 8.15 DAILY
**ST. MORITZ**
A NOVEL REAL ICE MUSICAL SPECTACLE.

**COMEDY.** Whi. 2578. Evgs., 8.30. Tues., Fri., 2.30.
**THE LAST STRAW**
by Edward Percy and Reginald Denham.
LUCIE MANNHEIM. MARIUS GORING.

**DRURY LANE.** 8.15. Mats., Wed. & Sat., 2.30.
IVOR NOVELLO, DOROTHY DICKSON,
MARIE LOHR in
**CREST OF THE WAVE.**

**DUCHESS,** Catherine Street. W.C.2 (Tem. 8243).
Evenings, 8.30. Matinees, Wed. and Sat., 2.30.
JEAN FORBES-ROBERTSON in J. B. Priestley's
**TIME AND THE CONWAYS**

**DUKE OF YORK'S.** Temple Bar 5211.
Evgs., 8.30. Mats., Wed. and Sat., 2.30.
MARGARET RAWLINGS in
**BLACK LIMELIGHT**

**GARRICK.** (Tem. 4601.) 8.40. Mon., Thurs., 2.30.
"A. A. MILNE'S SPARKLING COMEDY."
**SARAH SIMPLE**
LEONORA CORBETT, A. R. WHATMORE, VIOLA LYEL.

**GLOBE.** Ger. 1592. 8.30. Wed., Sat., 2.30.
BASIL SYDNEY in
**"BLONDIE WHITE"**
By Bernard Merrivale and Jeffrey Dell.

**HIPPODROME.** Ger. 3272. Evgs., 8.15,
Mats., Thurs. and Sats., at 2.30.
BOBBY HOWES and CICELY COURTNEIDGE
in **"HIDE AND SEEK."**

**HIS MAJESTY'S.** (Whi. 6606.) EVGS., 8.15.
**BALALAIKA** A Musical Play.
Mats., WEDNESDAYS & SATURDAYS, 2.30.

**LYRIC.** (Gerrard 3686.)
Evgs., 8.30 sharp. Mats., Wed., Thurs., 2.30.
**VICTORIA REGINA**
by LAURENCE HOUSMAN

**NEW.** Tem. 3878. EVGS., 8.15 sharp.
MATS., WEDS. and SATS., at 2.30 sharp.
**BONNET OVER THE WINDMILL.**
By DODIE SMITH.

**PLAYHOUSE.** Over 630 Perfs. Whi. 7774.
Evgs., 8.30 (ex. Mon.). Wed., Thurs., Sat., at 2.30.
NANCY PRICE in
**WHITEOAKS**

**QUEENS.** (Ger. 4517.) 8.15 sharp. Wed., Sat., 2.30.
JOHN GIELGUD in
**RICHARD II.**
by William Shakespeare.

**ROYALTY.** (Ger. 7331.) 8.30. Thurs., Sat., 2.30.
**I HAVE BEEN HERE BEFORE**
by J. B. PRIESTLEY.
Wilfrid Lawson. Patricia Hilliard. Lewis Casson.

**ST. JAMES'S.** Whi. 3903.
Evgs., 8.30 sharp. Mats., Wed., Thurs., 2.30.
**OLD MUSIC**
by KEITH WINTER.

**STRAND.** Tem.2660. Evgs., 8.30. Mats., Tu., Th., 2.30.
ROBERTSON HARE. ALFRED DRAYTON in
**"A SPOT OF BOTHER"**
A New Farce by VERNON SYLVAINE.

**VICTORIA PALACE.** (Vic. 1317.) 8.30. W., S., 2.30.
BASIL FOSTER in
**BUSMAN'S HONEYMOON.**
The Famous Lord Peter Wimsey Detective Comedy.

**WESTMINSTER.** Mon. 8, (subs. 8.30). W., S., 2.30.
**ANYTHING BUT THE TRUTH**
A New Comedy by Christine Longford.

**WYNDHAM'S.** Tem. 3028, 3029.
EVGS., 8.30. MATS., WED. & SATS., at 2.30
**"GEORGE and MARGARET."**
COMEDY by GERALD SAVORY.

## REPERTORY THEATRES

**THE PLAYHOUSE, LIVERPOOL.**
Evgs., 7.45. Mat., Sat., 2.30 p.m.
**THE VENETIAN**
by CLIFFORD BAX.

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by W. ALLEN HARKER and F. R. PRYOR.

**HULL.** Little.
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**WHAT EVERY WOMAN KNOWS**
by J. M. BARRIE.

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*The Advertisement Manager*

**NEW STATESMAN AND NATION**
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## RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 394

### Set by John Roberts

Everyone now knows what a "doodle" is—the half-conscious pictorial scribble we make on telephone pads or on a theatre programme during the interval. The *Evening Standard* publishes each night a page of "doodles," together with a short analytic report on the character of each. We offer the usual prizes (Two Guineas and Half a Guinea) for the best invented "doodle" of either a well-known or an imaginary person, accompanied by a brief analysis of his or her character.

### Report by John Roberts

Was there something wrong with the competition as I set it, or was the fault with my competitors? Their efforts, at any rate, were few and poor; so poor that I cannot recommend any of them for a first prize, or even ask the editor to print them. Gerard T. Meyneli came nearest the idea. His doodle of Gordon Selfridge awaiting a telephone call from the P.M. was lively enough to earn him the consolation of the second prize.

## CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

### PROBLEM 250.—THE SPINNAKER CLUB REGATTA

The Spinnaker Club had great fun this year at their annual regatta.

In the "J" class, seven owners entered their yachts. It was agreed that—to ensure a real test of skill—there should be seven races for this class, each owner sailing a different yacht in each race.

The following data are collated from various sources:

Mrs. Boom-Boom sailed her own yacht in the sixth race; in the seventh race it was sailed by the Duke of Dull.

Lord Luffagain's yacht was sailed by Sir Backwash Bilge in the fifth race, by Colonel Mainbrace in the sixth race, and by the noble lord himself in the seventh race.

The *Chloroform* was sailed in the first race by Lord Luffagain; in the second race by Mrs. Boom-Boom; in the third race by the Duke of Dull. In the last race Sir Backwash Bilge took her helm.

Sir Backwash Bilge's yacht was sailed by Admiral Afterguard in the third race. The Admiral handed over the helm to the owner, and he was succeeded by Lord Luffagain.

Colonel Mainbrace, in the first race, was at the helm of Dull's yacht.

The *Davy Jones*, in the first three races, was sailed successively by Admiral Afterguard, the Duke of Dull, and the Marquise des Milles Tonneres.

For the fourth, fifth and sixth races, the Marquise, Dull and the Admiral were successively at the helm of the yacht owned by the Marquise.

Similarly, the Admiral's yacht was successively sailed in these three races by himself, by Mainbrace, and by the Marquise.

The *Firefly* was sailed by Mainbrace in the fourth race, by Luffagain in the sixth, and by Mrs. Boom-Boom in the last.

The *Oloroso* was sailed by Mrs. Boom-Boom in the fifth race, by Bilge in the sixth, and by Afterguard in the last.

For the last race, the Marquise succeeded Dull at the helm of the *Ranunculus*.

*Who sailed whose boat in the second race?*

### PROBLEM 249.—ELECTING THE CHAIRMAN

I find that the wording of this problem has not conveyed a sufficiently precise impression. The sentence beginning "I was also supported by Still-Grinning," etc., should be amended to "I was generously supported by Still-Grinning," etc.

### PROBLEM 248.—A MESSAGE FROM MOSCOW

The clue is "the very reverse." Reversing the figures, we get 18541, etc.; then, intelligently guessing that 18 = R, 5 = E, 4 = D, etc., the message emerges as:

RED AGENTS ARRIVING AIRDROME TO-DAY.

### PROBLEM 247.—PIECRUST'S *v.* NOUGAT'S

A set of Low's cartoons goes to: F. B. Swift, Dundarroch, Forest Drive, Kingswood, Surrey.

*Six* points are awarded.

### PRIZES FOR PROBLEM SOLVERS

A set of Low's cartoons is awarded to the sender of a correct solution selected at random.

In addition, a record is kept of correct solutions sent, and of the points scored weekly by solvers. On attaining 100 points a solver is entitled to a prize consisting of any book (or books) reviewed or advertised in these columns, of a value not greater than 10*s*. Solvers who have won a prize on this basis are eligible for a second prize on attaining a further 120 points, and for a third prize on attaining a further 150. Solutions must be addressed to CALIBAN, c/o the Editor, and must reach this office not later than Tuesday week following publication of the problem. Solutions to two problems may be sent in one envelope, but on separate sheets of paper.

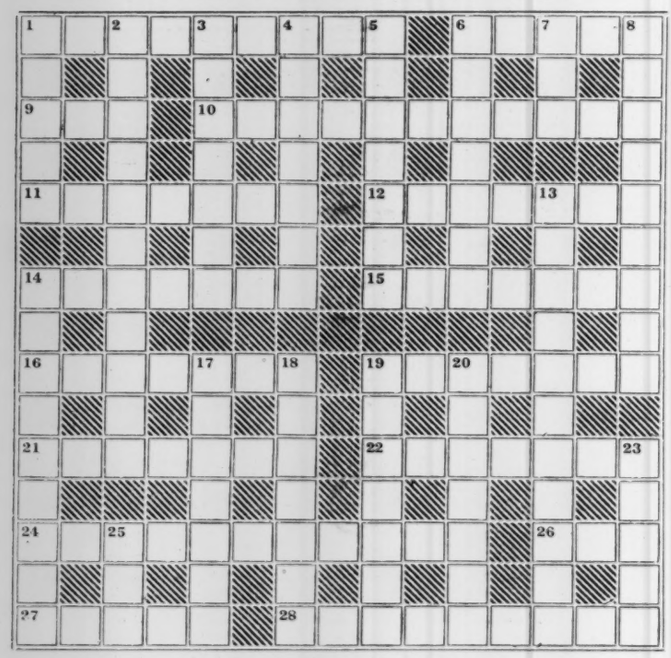
Some indication should be given of the method of solution.

[U.S.A. Competitors. The Editor regrets that the prizes offered in our Week-end Competitions cannot apply to American competitors.]

CALIBAN

## WEEK-END CROSSWORD 397

Books to the value of Five Shillings may be chosen by the sender of the first correct solution opened. Post solutions to arrive not later than first delivery Wednesday following the date of issue, addressed to "CROSSWORDS," 10 Great Turnstile, London, W.C.1.



Set by L.-S.

The last week's winner is

Mrs. T. J. Rees, 30 Eaton Crescent, Swansea

### ACROSS

1. Undeserved impositions? (9)
6. How a drink may be inspirited. (5)
9 and 26. Aristocratic cash. (3)
10. Often malted for youthful consumption. (11)
11. Un-tied as it were. (7)
12. I see fifty tune in. (7)
14. Goes to Spas. (7)
15. The terrier would of course easily smell it out. (7)
16. How boats are "stranded." (7)
19. His head, by the way, is a sign of a refreshing place. (7)
21. Flares up in a fairy booth. (7)
22. Colonel Blimp asserts there is a deadlock in it. (7)
24. One figures it out on it on ice. (11)
26. See 9. (3)
27. Stupidly crowded together. (5)
28. They do not go into transports over the deep. (9)

### DOWN

1. DHU would be another way of putting him. (5)
2. A heavy tread in Wellingtons perhaps. (11)
3. Is part of the final little account queried? (7)
4. The reverse of tails. (7)
5. The wood of the Ark. (7)
6. Ribs found in the vault. (7)
7. and 25. This plant is not up to an upstanding sea monster. (3)
8. Where John Ridd's uncle lived. (9)
13. Fortifications that can be packed up. (11)
14. Crusoe's childless poet. (9)
17. Used this tribesman to strike when drunk? (7)
18. Handy traders of course. (7)
19. Partly entitles the Ruler of Gwalior. (7)
20. Supplementary music. (7)
23. Portion of potage as Esau bargained for. (5)
25. See 7. (3)

### LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| R | E | S | T | A | M | P | S | ■ | ■ | ■ | S | C | U | M |
| O | ■ | T | ■ | M | ■ | A | ■ | R | ■ | G | ■ | O | ■ | A |
| A | L | A | R | M | ■ | R | O | A | D | R | A | C | E | S |
| S | ■ | T | ■ | O | ■ | T | ■ | I | ■ | A | ■ | O | ■ | T |
| T | R | I | E | N | N | I | A | L | ■ | D | R | A | K | E |
| E | ■ | O | ■ | ■ | ■ | N | ■ | W | ■ | A | ■ | ■ | ■ | R |
| D | A | N | C | I | N | G | P | A | R | T | N | E | R | S |
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| A | ■ | L | ■ | S | ■ | T | ■ | N | ■ | M | ■ | T | ■ | R |
| K | E | E | L | ■ | ■ | ■ | U | G | L | I | N | E | S | S |

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# THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By DIVES

RALLY IN SIGHT?—MARKETS AND SPECULATORS—SHIPBUILDING SETBACK—A "GOLD" HEDGE—GAUMONT-BRITISH

THE slump in security values reached a climax this week. On Wall Street on Monday stocks fell to new "lows," and in London even the gilt-edged market temporarily shared in the panicky liquidation. If an investor had entered the industrial equity market in Wall Street in March of this year he would on the average have lost 28 per cent. of his capital. If he had bought the market "leader," U.S. Steel, he would have lost about 50 per cent. If he had gone into British industrial shares in January he would have lost 22 per cent. These losses are distinctly unnerving, and even investors who have no financial need to sell are throwing stocks overboard in order to gain peace of mind. Even allowing for a sharp trade setback in America and a gradual decline in this country, it is not easy to account for the severity and rapidity of the fall in security values. I doubt whether it is mainly due to intelligent anticipation of the economic future. There are not so many intelligent investors alive to cause such trouble. I would attribute it partly to the unintelligent gambling in the early part of the year, which left in its train a wave of forced liquidation, partly to political and war scares, particularly the threat of a Mediterranean war, which caused Americans to panic out of stocks on Monday of this week, and partly to the snowball effect of this forced and panicky liquidation. Of course, the selling on the part of those investors who are really scared of a trade slump is now a market factor, but I am sure it has been exaggerated. There is always an end to forced liquidation and, if there is an end to war scares, probably a technical rally cannot now be long delayed; but on its first appearance investors should begin to review their portfolios and consider "switches" into shares which, on account of their relatively high dividend or earnings yields, may be expected to show resistance in the event of a general trade decline.

* * *

Those who blame the Stock Exchange for this disastrous slump are barking up the wrong tree. It is true that markets have become nominal in many cases, that jobbers lower quotations on very little selling and refuse to make close prices except in a small amount of stock; but these are merely the effects, not the causes, of the market malady. Instead of abusing jobbers for their cravenly behaviour and brokers for their foolhardy advice, it would be more useful to consider how excessive gambling and greed (the underlying cause of all Stock Exchange slumps) can be checked. There are two suggestions which I would submit to the appropriate authorities: first, dealing in commodity futures by speculators who are not actively engaged in the commodity trades should be prohibited; secondly, dealings in American common stocks on the London Stock Exchange should be put on a cash basis, like the gilt-edged market. Both these reforms could be instantly carried out—the first by commodity brokers refusing to accept bargains for "outsiders," the second by a simple order of the Stock Exchange Committee. If these two rules had been in force this year we should probably have been spared the present devastating slump.

* * *

Though there is no conclusive evidence as yet that general industrial productivity in this country is slowing down to the extent visible in the United States—September steel production, for example, constituted a new record—there are signs that in the case of one industry whose customers' calculations of prospective profits have to be made on the basis of deliveries eighteen months or so ahead, rising costs are beginning to have a definitely restrictive effect. During the third quarter of the year mercantile shipbuilding commenced amounted to only 219,000 tons, a decrease of 149,000 tons as compared with the June quarter. At the moment, time-charter rates and open-market "tramp" freights are highly remunerative for owners of general-trading cargo vessels, and unemployed tonnage has been reduced to negligible dimensions. But who shall say what freight-market conditions will be in the spring of 1939, when ships ordered now will be delivered? This sort of risk must always be run by shipping companies in relation to shipbuilding contracts; but, apart from the fact that the present international situation makes for caution, quotations for new tonnage are to-day about 60 per cent. higher than they were three years ago. With commodity prices tumbling and grain freights distinctly less buoyant than they were a month ago, shipowners are playing for safety. Holders of shipping shares, and particularly those which have risen greatly in the past year, should bear this attitude in mind.

* * *

Last week I mentioned that a firm of brokers had put forward gold mining finance shares as an investment "hedge" on the grounds that, if commodity prices continued to fall, the gold interests of the mining finance houses would return to favour, while if they recovered the commodity interests of these groups would become more valuable. A correspondent rightly points out that if I believe in a trade recession and a fall in commodity prices, the correct "hedge" would be a purchase of gold shares, pure and simple. I agree, and I give the following list of first-class gold "hedges":

| | Price. | Dividend. Dec., 1936. | Dividend. June, 1937. | Dividend* Yield % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Brakpan, 5/- .. .. | 2 17/32 | 30% | 30% | £6 15 6 |
| Crowns, 10/- .. .. | 13 1/4 | 95% | 95% | £8 0 6 |
| East Rand Prop., 10/- | 2 27/32 | 17 1/2 % | 17 1/2 % | £7 0 3 |
| East Geduld, £1 .. | 8 5/8 | 23 3/4 % | 23 3/4 % | £5 14 9 |

* Equivalent gross, after allowing for a reduced rate of income tax.

I have chosen mines which have a relatively long life.

* * *

I hope that by the time these notes are read the unhappy Gaumont-British shareholders will have succeeded in securing a consolidated statement of the group's balance-sheet position. The accounts for 1936–37 are at once uninformative and disquieting. Trading profits amount to £561,702, as compared with £715,514. After providing for taxation, debenture interest and preference dividend, and the remarkably small sum of £13,951 for depreciation, £16,463 was earned for the £3,000,000 of ordinary capital. Losses incurred on past film productions amount to £766,809, and are dealt with by utilising the £200,000 specially reserved for this purpose in last year's accounts, by withdrawing £435,278 from reserve and by reducing the carry-forward from £163,484 to £31,953. General reserve now stands at only £85,000 in a balance sheet totalling £13½ millions, and there is a bank overdraft of £819,778. Not only so; in the absence of a consolidated statement the real value of the assets is to some extent problematical. Apart from fixed assets of £2,077,762, in relation to which the £13,951 provided for depreciation seems barely adequate in view of the fact that the Shepherd's Bush studios are no longer functioning as planned, holdings in and debts due from subsidiaries total £10,406,452. Have the subsidiaries made sufficient provision for depreciation? Have any further losses on production account to be dealt with? Clarification of the balance sheet is urgent, and the question of capital reconstruction is one whose consideration cannot long be deferred.

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Company Meeting.

# HARRISONS & CROSFIELD, LTD.

## TEA AND RUBBER POSITION.

Presiding at the 29th Annual Meeting of Harrisons and Crosfield, Limited, on October 12th, Mr. Eric Miller said: The Company's financial position is one of exceptional strength. Our liquid resources are ample for all our present commitments, after providing for which there is a surplus available to us for employment as opportunity offers more profitably than in the gilt-edge market.

He then dealt at some length with the Staff Pension Scheme and with the position of the Deferred Ordinary Capital.

Reviewing the Tea industry, Mr. Miller said: The past year has been on the whole a moderately prosperous one for producers in general and a good one for lower-grade tea. It is most satisfactory that renewal of international regulation for a further period of five years from next March has been agreed to by the producing interests concerned, and by the Governments of India, Ceylon and the Netherlands East Indies, as this should ensure a continuation of reasonable prices. The stocks in bond in the U.K. at the end of August were 144 million lbs., which is 72 million less than during the corresponding period last year, but by December we feel sure the decrease as compared with the previous year will not be so large and buyers need have no fear of there not being enough tea for everyone.

He then said: It is impossible for anyone to estimate even approximately the volume of outside speculation in rubber during the course of this year, but the panicky state of the market last week suggests that it must have assumed considerable dimensions. Producers of rubber, and manufacturers who are converting it into usable goods, have meanwhile been carrying on their respective functions in an orderly manner, and the average price which producers have received for their crop during 1937 (which corresponds, broadly speaking, to what manufacturers have had to pay for it) works out at a figure which gives cause for no particular dissatisfaction either way.

The rubber-growing industry has every reason to be thankful for the benefits of international regulation of supplies. The present agreement continues to the end of 1938, and producers generally will unite in desiring its extension for a further period of years with such modifications, if any, as seem desirable in the light of present knowledge.

A dividend of 20 per cent. on the Deferred Ordinary Stock, making 25 per cent. for the year, was declared.

Company Meeting.

# HOSCOTE RUBBER ESTATES, LIMITED

## MR. ERIC MACFADYEN'S ADDRESS.

THE annual general meeting of the above company took place on Thursday, October 14th, in London. Mr. E. Macfadyen who presided referred to the death of Mr. Gourju, and proceeding said (in part):

After adjustments in detail, due to re-survey, our aggregate acreage is shown as 4,725 acres planted. Divided into our issued capital this equals £35.2 per acre. The significant changes in our balance sheet are the higher balance at credit of profit and loss account of £25,483 8s. 2d. as against £11,848 16s. 6d., and the rise in our cash and gilt-edged investments from £30,029 11s. 9d. to £42,343 12s. 10d.

Our crop, amounting to 1,585,433 lbs., was sold for £60,523 7s. 3d. net—which compares with £34,438 13s. 3d. realised for the 1,287,067 lbs. a year ago, practically the same cost per lb. having been incurred. Earnings per acre came out at £5 13s. 0d. compared with £1 17s. 0d.

Having experienced such satisfactory results we have not hesitated again to charge profit and loss account with the whole cost incurred in the year on new buildings and plant and upon the programme of replanting and special cultivation in hand. These items total £6,355 5s. 11d. and we are then left with £21,681 1s. 3d.; which will permit of our paying a 10 per cent. dividend and raising the carry forward by £2,293 5s. 3d. to £6,095 12s. 2d. Our Standard Production has been raised by successive stages to 2,333,799 lbs., equivalent to 494 lbs. per acre.

Under the Regulation regime it is impossible to forecast outputs, but if we are permitted to produce 1,900,000 lbs., as we probably may be during the current year, we shall have no difficulty in doing so on A, B, C, or equivalent tapping. Forward sales of 524,160 lbs. have been made for delivery during the period at 9¾d. per lb., which should go some way to counteracting the recession in the market. I do not yet forsee any material reduction in cost per lb.

He then referred to the new Subordinate Staff reserve and continued: It is always tempting to foretell the future course of the rubber market, but I am going to control any such inclination this morning. I will content myself with suggesting that most of the recent weakness of the market can be attributed to conditions affecting commodity (and other) markets in general. The statistical position of rubber is sound, and we have confidence in the International Committee.

The report and accounts were unanimously adopted.


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